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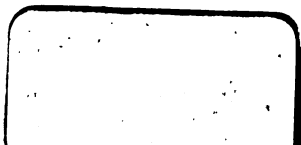
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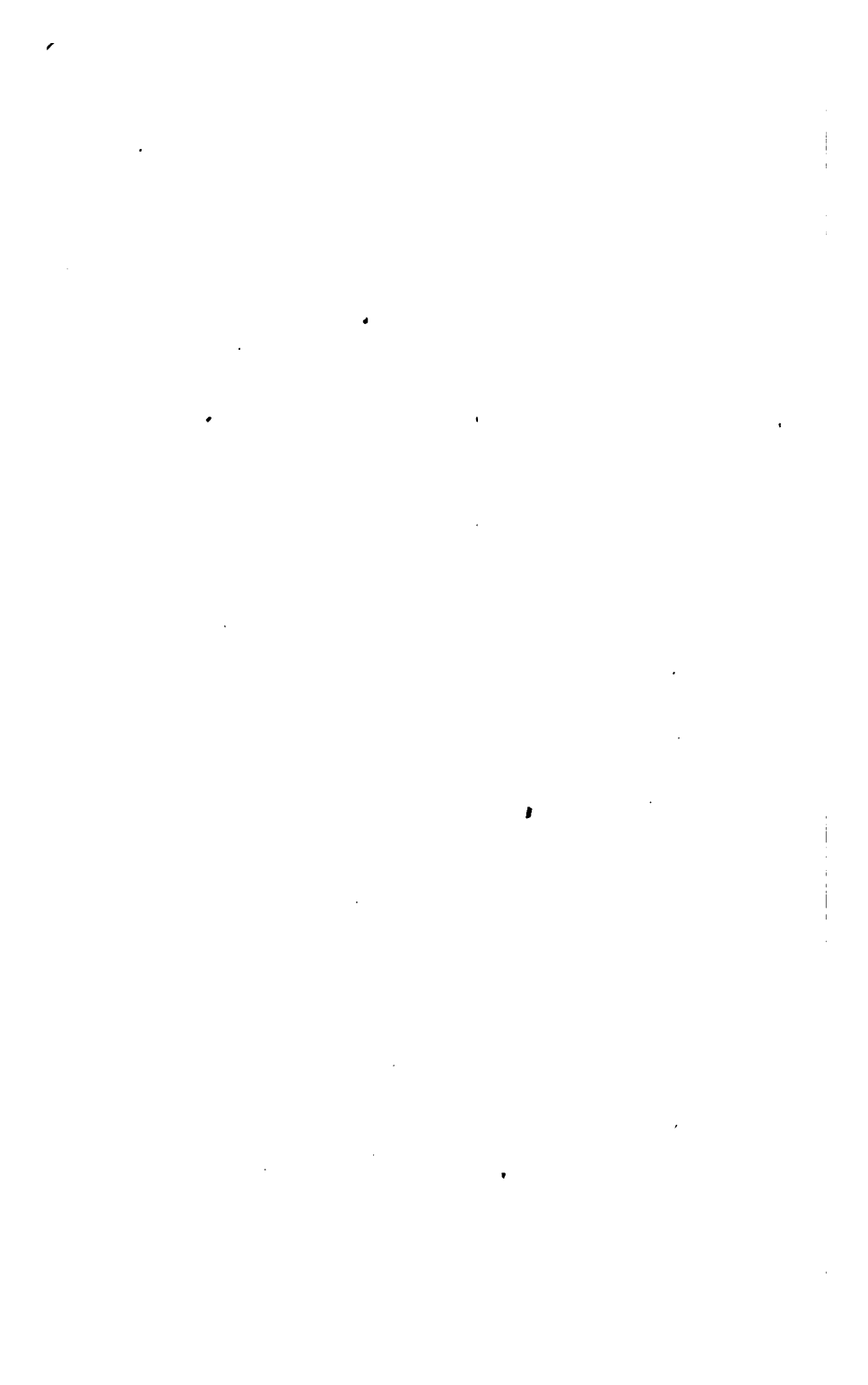
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THE LADY OF GLYNNE.

CHAPTER I.

"Time hath, my lord, a wallet on his back,
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion."

PERHAPS a minute elapsed.

Then he said, in the same calm voice,—

"I know not what arrangement you have made about my boy with his mother, I hardly think she is aware who is her guest."

"It was yesterday, only yesterday that I discovered it. I thought it better to wait, to see you."

"You judged rightly, kindly. My boy is not a philosopher yet. He will have to rough

it in the world ere he takes a sudden parting calmly."

Oh, Glynne, how cuttingly you said that, yet how instantly you saw my position, and helped me out of it!

"I cannot withhold from you, at the risk, though, of being considered impertinent, how grateful I am for the love and care you have bestowed on my boy, and all for his own sake, too, little spoilt animal. I was not aware, of course, to whom I was indebted, but allow me to say this is the first time I ever returned after an absence, that I have not had cause to regret leaving him. He would have mourned terribly, had you left him yesterday. I thank you from my heart."

Though every word was as darts of flame scorching me, with ruddy, glancing tongues, though I shrunk and shivered with strange mortification, and feelings I disliked and hated, yet could not define them, or struggle out of the misery they gave me, yet my woman's nature recoiled from showing any more emotion than himself.

I said calmly,—

"I have been living with Doctor Blaize, an old friend of my father's, for the last two years; and when he died, I accepted a situation as nursery-governess in the south, preparatory to asking to be restored once more to you all."

"I believe your re-appearance will cause great joy. I will take upon myself to tell Selina; her health is delicate. She mourned for you."

If I had thought or paused, all my fortitude would have given way. So I continued,—

"I used to see your boy on the sands at Brighton: his nurses were not good. We became acquainted, and play-fellows. I know nothing more than that his mother came for me suddenly, and took me away with her. I was the more content to go, and less curious as to her name, because I recognised her, and hoped I had greater chance of meeting with some of you, through her means, than by staying with Mrs. Hall."

Glynne bowed his old haughty mocking bow.

I drew myself up also, and said, "I presume I had better go to 'the Lady,' and say I must leave her."

I thought of little Neville, and shuddered.

"I presume Miss Offley need be in no such hurry."

"But she must ; ' the Lady ' ought to know—"

"Of course I will take upon myself the task of placing you in your proper position, in this house, as a guest—"

"You know, Glynne, she ought to know, I ought not to stay."—I paused embarrassed, though quite as stately as my capabilities would permit me.

"If you mean," said Glynne, in his softest voice, yet with something of reproach in it, "that my wife has anything more to learn of her husband's antecedents, when she hears the name of Miss Offley, you are mistaken. It will probably be an effort to her to recall a past tale, but in knowing your name, she knows everything. You stand in no false position under my roof."

Again the burning blushes rushed all over my face and throat.

"She will wish me to go ; I must leave Neville."

"On the contrary, I believe she will wish you

to remain. Thinking is at all times a great effort to her ; yet from the little I have heard her say, I believe her first feeling, when she hears who you are, will be fear lest you should leave her."

It seemed to me all the time very wrong, I should stay in Glynne's house ; but he was so indifferent, apparently so utterly callous as to the past, I could not, for very shame, give voice to my thoughts.

"I will go to her now, I believe she drives out shortly ; will you allow me to send for you in case she would like to see you ?"

I could only bow in assent.

Luckily I met little Neville on the stairs, coming in search of me. I think otherwise, I should have gone straight out of the house. In less than five minutes I received "the Lady's" compliments, and she would be glad to speak to Miss Offley.

I went down to her. She was alone, her eyes wide open, and looking rather animated—

"Do you know, I always thought you were a lady ; sit down, do. My lord said I judged very rightly about your character, it's just what it always was."

I could not tell how to reply.

"Don't go away, don't leave us, because I do not know what to do with little Harry. He was always naughty and troublesome, until you came."

"I should not like to leave him suddenly."

"No, don't, it will be very awkward for me ; it will make me ill, and then my lord will be annoyed. I remember meeting you, riding, a little fair girl, on a very spirited pony. You are prettier now."

"I am ready to do whatever you wish," I said, as she paused for breath.

"Don't go, don't be in a hurry, I have a great deal to say, when I can remember it."— After a while, she added, looking rather angry for her—

"Why would you not marry my lord?"

I saw in a moment by the expression of her face, that she was annoyed she had married somebody whom some other body would not. Her self-love was wounded.

"I was not fitted for Glynne's wife. His uncle wished him to marry you."

"Ah, so he did ! I remember it all now, and

I quite agree. My lord and I are made for each other. We are just suited. We have never had a dispute." Another pause.

I never felt so awkward, or at such a loss for words, not to say thoughts. My brain was wild with confusion.

"My lord says you are our relation, and ought to live with us. I shall like it. You will write my letters for me, perhaps ; I want a companion very much."

A companion to Glynne's wife ! What a monstrous absurdity the idea appeared to me.

But I acquiesced in simple words.

"Thank you ; that is settled. Now let us have our drive. I feel so well to-day ; quite in spirits. It always does me good to see my lord."

In the evening she wished me to dine with them, but I declined. It was imperative on me to think over my position ; and Neville was still my darling, my charge.

I discovered that my place in the establishment was already changed. The servants all called me Miss Offley ; one told me she was appointed to wait on me. The nurse had to do

all the little offices for Neville that I had done, though in my presence. And I had a bed-room and sitting-room, *en suite*, appropriated to my sole use.

As I sang Neville to sleep, I thought over my plans.

I could not but think that Glynne judged rightly in putting us on such a footing with each other, every remembrance of the past must be blotted out, and obliterated at once and for good.

The past must be as if it had never been. Before I could really settle anything, I must see and know all particulars regarding the homes I had before, their power of being mine once more. I felt sure Lady Maria would never wish me to be an inmate of her house again, and I had no inclination myself, to be the innocent means of causing dissension between her and my guardian. I could have partly a home with my uncle, with my Selina. I would consult them all.

I had just arrived at this conclusion, when I received her Ladyship's compliments, and would I join her in the drawing-room. I had one

white muslin dress ; this I put on quickly, and went down.

She was still looking very animated, and seemed much pleased with herself.

“ It is so nice to have some one to whom I can talk, besides my maid. I have often thought to send for you before, but my lord, I imagined, might not wish me to get on familiar terms with a governess.”

As she meant no offence, I did not quarrel with the mode in which she expressed herself, so I answered—

“ I like being useful ; you cannot give me too much to do.”

“ How nice ! don’t you ever feel fatigued ?”

“ Oh, yes, sometimes ; but that is a pleasant feeling, especially if one is satisfied with what one has done.”

“ Ah, how different you are from me ; my constitution is so very weak ; my lord is sometimes quite alarmed about me. I eat a great deal, and make a point of having meat three times a day ; but I remain just as weak.”

I thought to myself, “ If I live with you, I

will try and make you exert yourself a little more." But I said aloud—

"A short walk every day might make a difference."

"Oh, no! I took a little walk once, at my lord's request, about a year ago, and I ached all over afterwards."

"That would only be the first time."

"Ah, so he said; but stay a minute, say no more; I have something to tell you, and I must think what it is."

This occasioned a pause, which I feared would end in a doze, but she was really trying to think.

"What was it about? My lord told me to tell her it was something concerning a will. Ah, yes, that was it; the old lord of Glynne has left you a legacy of five thousand pounds."

"I suppose," said I, laughing, "because he was pleased I ran away, and left Glynne to marry his beautiful Miss Harrington."

"I dare say! What a pretty laugh! I like to hear laughing, but I cannot do so myself, it is so fatiguing."

"You must tell Glynne I won't take his uncle's money, he must give it to little Neville."

"So you call him Neville? It is a pretty name, but Harry is less fatiguing to say."

"What a magnificent fellow he is."

"Yes, is he not? He takes after me; but I had no idea children would be so troublesome. But stay, don't answer, I have something else to tell you."

Inspired by the events of the day, her ideas came pretty quickly, and it did not take her long to recollect that in a certain desk I should find some papers relative to myself. I went to the desk, and brought them; and as she expressed curiosity about them, we looked over them together.

There was the certificate of my marriage apparently torn out of the Register Book,—a letter from the clergyman who married me, declaring that he performed the ceremony unknowing that I was under age and under restraint. A lawyer's paper containing a judgment or opinion upon the validity of such marriage, and a paper drawn up that it was invalid, signed by the names of all the parties concerned in it save my own.

“How nice!” said “the Lady;” “now you can marry again without any trouble. I must say when my lord does a thing, he always does it thoroughly. I feel I can always rely on him. I see your name is Uriel—curious name. That makes me remember something else. You are my cousin, and I am to call you Uriel.”

CHAPTER II.

“ Hopes and recollections worn
Close to the vital seat of human clay :
Glad meetings, tender partings, that upstay
The drooping mind of absence.”

WORDSWORTH.

“ THAT is so long a name, and difficult to remember. Pray call me Nellie.”

“ No, I like Uriel, it is uncommon. My Lord told me I should like your name, and I do ; it is ladylike. That is why I liked you from the first ; I can always tell a lady.”

“ And am I to call you cousin ?”

“ Yes, I like ‘ cousin.’ My Lord has whims, you know ; he does not like my christian name, so he always calls me Miss Harrington.”

This time we both laughed, and she seemed to enjoy it.

"I used to tell him it was very wrong, and I a married woman ; but he would do it ; and I like it now, because, you know, it is, perhaps, in some measure due to me. I shall be my father's sole heiress."

Though I could not very well see why she should be called Miss Harrington for that, I was afraid of fatiguing her by demanding an explanation, so I said—"And what is your christian name?"

"Eliza. My Lord says he does not like it, because it has a z in it, which is put last in the alphabet, as it is ugly to look at, uncomfortable to write, and harsh to pronounce. My Lord is so amusing sometimes ; it always does me good to have him with me."

At this moment the door opened, and my Lord entered. He bowed to me, as if our meeting was an every-day occurrence, and of the most common-place kind.

He then sat down by his wife, and said, "You are fond of music, Miss Harrington ; if I remember right, your new cousin used to play." ("Remember right !" Oh, Glynne.)

"Oh, how nice ! and I am really fatigued.

I want some soft, gentle music to set me to sleep. I am quite excited, my Lord."

"It is very becoming to you, Miss Harrington, you look well this evening."

"I shall like Uriel very much; we are already great friends; she laughs so prettily—just like a lady."

"Indeed!"

"And, my Lord, when you are away, she will be such a comfort to me."

"If you can keep her."

"Why? who will want her? I can never manage Harry, you know."

"Mrs. Graham, my sister, may require her, and her relations, her guardian. She is a popular person, Miss Harrington, or was."

"Oh! but you must take care she lives with me, my Lord. I like her. Do you think she is pretty?"

"I have not looked at her yet, critically."

It must not be supposed I sat calmly by, hearing all this. I had been opening the piano, and settling my thoughts ere I began to play.

"The Lady" chattered away in the same style for half-an-hour, then she dozed off. Glynne

took up a book, and I played on till tea came. After drinking mine, I went up-stairs, and remained there.

In the morning, little Neville was sent for to be with his father while he had breakfast. When he was brought back to me, he was sobbing, not naughtily, but in grief. The dear papa had gone away again.

At one, we were desired to come and take,—Neville his dinner, and I my luncheon with “the Lady.” She expressed herself highly charmed with our company, saying, “My Lord had recommended the arrangement as something to amuse her until he returned ; and she was amused very much ; she liked to see Harry and me together.”

Then we were to drive together. The air had a soporific effect on “the Lady” and my boy. But thought was to me as necessary as food. I never liked talking in an open carriage. In the evening, I dined with my “cousin,” and thinking that it was my duty, as I had been the means of her becoming “the Lady of Glynne,” to do my best to rouse her from habits so indolent and deleterious, I exerted myself to the utmost in entertaining her.

She did not doze off once, but laughed several times most heartily, never remembering that she ought to be fatigued. I tried to excite her to play a duet with me, but failed. Nevertheless the idea was put into her head. I found she had a liking for something besides dozing—and that was a game of cards called “Piquet.” I did not know any cards, not even their names, myself, but it amused her to teach me, and I bestowed my best attention.

At eleven o'clock, when she ought to have gone to bed, she was more wide awake than ever I had seen her, and chatted away, giving me a great deal of her confidence, which, I am sorry to say, did not encrease my already limited ideas as to her sense.

People have different ways of going about the world. Some are fault-finders, and go “spying out the nakedness of the land,” and imagine they are doing their duty, pointing out their neighbours' deficiencies.

Others move about in the world like automata; they go as the world goes, they say as the world says, they dress as the world dresses, and

have no conception that they may strike out new lights of their own.

Again, you meet people whose business consists in being charmed with every thing and every body that they see. These people are agreeable, but not generally wise.

Some are selfish, and confine their thoughts to their own firesides, hardly remembering there are other people in the world, and if they do remember them, casting them off as beings of another sphere and nature than theirs.

Lastly, there are natures who see evil, only to think how they may remedy it. Not by open reproof or public exposure, but by the judicious handling of a Christian nature. A nature that feels it owes to a merciful God freedom from such sins, or, more precious still, wisdom to control such sins. Natures such as these, generally scan their fellow-creatures with kindly interest; they know they must have faults, and it is a pleasant task to act so as to soften them down, perhaps dispel them; while virtues are fostered, admired, imitated. These natures know that the work given them to do in their Lord's vineyard consists of the little

daily tasks and troubles of common life. Each day they have to control a hasty word, reprove a wrong judgment, repent an unkind action. While in their dreams at night must no recollection remain of a soul turned aside from harsh treatment—of a fellow-pilgrim beguiled from the right path—of a slothful indifference to the eternal welfare of a mortal being. These natures are cheerful, because they expect not much; they are active, because the time is short; they lose no opportunity, because they “know not the day or the hour” when their work shall cease.

I wished to be one of these. I had so few relations and friends, I was ready to claim all as such. I wanted to do my duty, to gain my hire—deserve my Lord’s praise of “Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” and yet in no case to laud forth, or place prominently before the world, my deeds and intentions.

I liked very well the idea of quietly, unostentatiously, but surely, rousing this poor over-fed, over-luxurious, somewhat selfish, and terrible indolent lady into a rational being. I thought if

I did so, it would repay any injury I might have done to Glynne.

I set heartily about it, more interested in my work than anything that had ever yet occurred to me.

The next day, by the post, I received a letter, which startled me by the unusual direction—to Miss Offley.

Within was a statement, from the London bankers, as to the amount of money I possessed in their hands and in the funds, saying that measures would be taken to make all over to me, on my coming of age, next June, and enclosing a draft for one hundred pounds, by order of Lady Maria Glynne.

This was very acceptable.

“Cousin,” said I, at luncheon, “ought I not to buy some better dresses, and those sorts of things? See, Lady Maria has sent me some money.”

“The Lady” liked choosing dresses very much; so did I.

It is very pleasant to feel not only well-dressed, but becomingly so. All colours matching; no outrage to good taste. To be well-

dressed is a great promoter of self-respect, thought I always.

We had dresses sent for us to look at, so that we might see them by night and by day; "an essential thing," said "the Lady."

I must take my chance about the dress-maker just now. When I went to town, her people should make all my things.

In the evening I was delightfully clever at piquet. It was quite a pleasure to teach me.

"Then," said I, "do, cousin, reward me, by playing this duet."

However, there were some things "my cousin" would not do. The duet must wait.

My boy was more lovely and engaging every hour. As we sat one evening, he and I, in the drawing-room, romping together, the third day after Glynne's departure, waiting for "the Lady's" appearance, a carriage drove up.

"Papa, papa!" said Neville, in raptures. I drew back, I was not as stoical as some people.

In a few minutes, the noise of other feet besides his being heard, the door opened. Then appeared the dearest, loveliest vision my eyes

ever saw. She came swiftly to me, she pushed back the hair from my face, she said—

“Nellie, my Nellie is found,” and half-fainted in my arms.


Ah! Selina, fair, fragile, lovely lily, how had I ever the heart to live so long away from you.

She soon recovered, and the first words she said were—

“Don’t be alarmed—don’t fear for me. I shall grow strong and well, now that I know you are yet alive—that you are indeed Nellie, my Nellie.”

And we kissed each other, and wept aloud. How my heart ached with shame and remorse.

“Glynne would not tell me, but he must have told Richard, he was so willing to trust me with him. You know Glynne’s way, so cool, so calm. I ought to have guessed—but, oh! Nellie, I never thought he would be thus, when you were concerned. I mean nothing wrong, dear, but to have you back again—you once more restored—I could not have retained the secret calmly for one moment. I need not ask if you have been well. Oh! Nellie, sweet



Nell! how you have grown; what a figure you have, child. Do you know how pretty you are, yet so unlike any one I ever saw. Do you see that you are still a fairy, a sylph, with eyes clearer than ever. Oh, Nellie, kiss me, put your arms round me, let me feel it is you!"

Thus did my Selina talk.

We had been left alone after Selina's restoration from her fainting fit.

"Glynne only said he wished me to go with him to St. Leonards, for a particular reason. It was when within a mile of the house, that he began to be uneasy and look strange. 'I think I ought to have prepared you,' said he, 'you are only half strong.' 'Is it for joy or sorrow, Glynne?' I asked. You should have seen his face, my Nellie, as he said, dryly, 'I suppose I may certainly say, joy.' 'Then that will not kill me,' I answered. 'Will you take the consequences on your own head?' he asked. 'Yes,' I answered; 'but then, Nellie, I did not know I was to see you—you. Did you notice how I looked at you before I realised my happiness? It was you, yet not you. The fairy child, Nellie, turned into a sylph; when

those wonderful eyes flashed up, with that look of joy, and sent to heaven the never-forgotten expression, innocently child-like, I knew it was true, ere your voice said, 'My Selina !' Oh, Nellie, this is happiness, great, irrepressible. I thought it my fault as much as his, that you had to flee from those wicked Glynnes."

I only said to all this, between my kisses and tears, "My Selina, forgive me, my Selina !"

"I fretted and mourned for you, Nellie ; I knew you must have been terribly ill-treated, coerced, before you could have done that, and I thought only of Glynne, and would not read your letter. I knew how pathetic it would be. You know what I mean. And I became ill—very ill, and lost my little child—but Nellie, wait, ring the bell."

I did so. Immediately there appeared a stout woman, whom I easily recognised as Neale, with a little fair child in her arms.

"Good Lord deliver us every one ! what's that ?" said Neale, turning pale as a ghost, and luckily dropping into a chair.

I ran to her, and kissed her, saying,—

“Neale, do you love me still, may I yet be your little missy?”

I took my Selina's little fair child in my arms, while Neale wept copiously and loudly.

The child was at the age when shyness begins and the confidence of ignorance is replaced by the vague fears of knowledge. It looked steadily and enquiringly into the unknown face, then the little lips parted with a smile, the fat pink fingers were placed confidingly on my cheek; Selina's child accepted me as a friend.

Selina was prettier than ever, but very fragile; unable even to carry the great healthy baby; so I kept it in my arms, kissing her and her mother by turns.

“Oh, missie, missie, I am very thankful the Lord has restored you. I knew my mistress would never get better until you were once more among us. She would moan and fret after you, wondering if you were friendless and in want, and many and many a time have I said, ‘Could she be more homeless and friendless than when she came to us?—and see how we all loved her. But you have a deal to answer for, Miss Offley’”

And Neale drew herself up, stern and indig-

nant, even attempting to take baby from my arms. But the little thing resisted, and clutched tightly by my hair, pulling it down from the comb that fastened it up.

"Hush, Neale, we have her once more ; see, she weeps, and you know she never did so with us—she is sorry ; she has returned, never more shall she shed tear for me."

And my Selina clasped me close.

"You had wound yourself into my heart, Nellie. I tell Richard he owes my love to you, for you made me think what a holy, pure thing woman's love must be, and I lost with you part of myself. All that was right and true, all that was good and unselfish, was associated with you. I feared my evil nature would return——"

"You had none—you had none," I exclaimed, vehemently ; "we were to blame—we did not understand you. But you have higher motives for acting now—say, is it not so?"

"Ah, yes, Nellie ! I thank God ; but Neale, take the child and leave us. I have much to ask of you, and tell you in return, my Nellie."

"I'll never go, until little Missie makes me a promise," began Neale, still sulky.

“I promise faithfully, by the love of my Selina, by the life of this little child, by my hope of Heaven, by my desire to win God’s favour, never to leave home again without your permission.”

“Thank you, little Missie, heartily, and forgive me; but my missus is my missus, and I would not be doing my duty by her, if I let any one and every one just be off and on with her as if she was like any common folk.”

CHAPTER III.

“ So let them rest—the buried griefs ;
The place is holy where they lie ;
On life’s cold waste their graves are placed,
The flowers look upward to the sky.”

CHARLES MACKAY.

GLYNNE had considerably ordered us our dinner up in my sitting-room, so that Selina and I spent the whole evening together.

“ I must not hurt your feelings, or frighten you from us again, my Nellie, so do not ask me any leading questions. I can tell you, if you like, how I loved, mourned, and wept for you.”

“ My uncle——”

“ He came home immediately on hearing the rumour, but somehow he appeared to think with

us, it was useless searching for you. 'You were an extraordinary little myth,' he said, 'and, if on earth, would come flying back to us.'

"He only encouraged, and did all in his power to hurry on Glynne's marriage, thinking that then you would certainly re-appear. We were all so disappointed—we had the account of the marriage blazed forth in every paper."

"He soon married, then?"

"Yes, directly, dear. In fact, you know Glynne is very strange, he never said one word to me, but Neale heard from Hind (who was the last person that saw you), the following circumstances. As she was returning up-stairs after breakfast, to fasten your dressing-case, and do the last little offices she could, she met Glynne (my poor Glynne, you must allow me to say so, Nellie), coming out of your room. He had your veil in his hand, and as he spoke to her, though his voice was perfectly calm, his face was white, his eyes glowing, and between his fingers she saw a crushed letter, and the glitter of a plain gold ring; it was bent in his grasp as if of weak wire. He said to her, 'Pray take no further trouble, Miss Offley does

not intend leaving with me. You will tell Lady Maria the ceremony of this morning was a mistake.' Hind says she never can forget his face. He ordered his portmanteau to be put into the carriage, which had been at the door some time, and, it is said, he drove back to the church, obtained the clergyman's direction, took him with him to his solicitors. He then sent away the carriage, and no one knows what became of him for many days—I believe a fortnight. We all received formal notices that the marriage was broken off in consequence of your repugnance to it, and indeed disappearance. But Richard kept the worst part from me. Nellie, he knew, if no one else did, how frantically I loved you, you little ungrateful thing, and how I lamented never reading your appealing letter."

"And when did you see Glynne again?"

"Oh, Nellie, that told me all: he never said one word to me, he never answered one question, he never alluded to the past, but his black brows met together, and it does not seem to me they have ever parted since. He was thin and worn. He looked as if he had never slept or taken food. I could guess what he had been

doing. I fancy he never was one hour in the same place all that time."

"When did he marry?"

"Why then, to be sure, at that very time, during that very visit. As he was going away, he said, 'I am to be married on the twenty-second of June to Miss Harrington.' 'Oh, Glynne!' was all I could say. He answered calmly, 'What is the matter? why should I not?' and I said 'Oh, Glynne!' again. He said in answer, 'I have had few people to love me, none to care for me but my uncle; it would be a poor sacrifice to give him my life, therefore I give him more, my happiness.' 'But, Glynne,' I began, again. He put his hand on my mouth, and said, 'Selina, somewhere a curse is pronounced on the children of evil parents. I shall be glad, sister, to take your share. May you be happy.' Oh, Nellie! there are few people like Glynne; he reminds me of a grand old ruin, standing out in bold but sad contrast to the white cottages and thatched houses of this every-day world. He is ruined, a ruin, and yet intended by God to be the strong tower to which many might resort for shelter

and assistance. Nellie, you are shivering—how white you are. Do you feel ill?”

“And, Lady Maria, my guardian?”

“He came home about a year ago. Nellie, none mourned more for you than he did. He could not but think my mother had some hand in your disappearance. He left her almost immediately to go and seek for you; but to our surprise he soon returned, happy and content. He then devoted himself to poor mamma. You cannot think how she is altered. She will not see me, or any of us, except at night, when she can sit in the gloom. She has some fearful disease, which is wasting her life away, but she does not like anyone to know it. She is not altered in reality in heart, I fear, but very much so in appearance. This war obliged Captain Forest to leave her. His honour was concerned. He is forward in every engagement—his ship seems employed in every danger.”

“And Isabel, my cousins?”

“She is married—she married abroad; but Georgy is still at home, and not improved. She hopes to marry that foolish Mr. Hamilton; and indeed we hear sad tales of him. One is, that

he is already married to a very handsome girl, who was his mother's laundry-maid. Now, Nellie, let me hear your adventures—tell me everything,”

“Inform me first, when did the old Lord of Glynne die; and is—is Glynne happy?”

“The old Lord lived to see Glynne's boy; and that made up to him for discovering, when too late, that he had not chosen Glynne a very sensible wife.”

“But she seems to love him—”

“And have you been all this time in one place, Nellie?”

“Yes.—Is Glynne happy?”

“I never asked him. Who is Phebe, that you talk of?”

“The dearest girl! I think ‘the Lady’ would improve, if excited up a little—”

“Excite her, if you choose. Let me ask Phebe to come and see me?”

“She would be delighted. Is ‘the Lady’ fond of you?”

“I never heard. What is Phebe's other name?”

"White. 'The Lady' eats too much, and is indolent. Is not that all, Selina?"

"Miss White. I will write to her now."

"'My word!' as she says, don't write to Miss White. She is a little servant maiden."

"Your maid?"

"No, not exactly. But now tell me—I ask this question as one who asks you to give her happiness or bid her despair—Can I do aught to help Glynne?"

"Yes, you can love his boy. He told me, as he came on the journey, 'I have found a little, small mother for Neville, who seems to understand his peculiar characteristics.' I answered, 'Does Eliza like her?' And he said, 'It was impossible she could do otherwise.' — Tears again, Nellie. I am glad to see them. You know you did Glynne a great wrong."

"But it will be strange my remaining in his house."

"It is strange, when you think of it. But he will sacrifice everything, sooner than suffer Neville to be ruined. I do not know how he will manage it, but it will be done, and without scathe to you, my Nellie, naughty Nellie."

"I love the child so, Selina."

"I see you do, fidgeting in and out of the room so often, to look after him. I am not half so fidgetty about my brat. I will tell you a plan. You and Neville shall come home with me."

CHAPTER IV.

"It is not in the mountains;
Nor the palaces of pride,
That Love will fold his wings up,
And rejoicingly abide;
But in meek and gentle natures
His home is ever found,
As the lark that sings in Heaven
Builds his nest upon the ground."
LAMAN BLANCHARD.

THE next day, little Neville was sent for early, to go out with his father. Selina and I were admitted to the bedside of "the Lady," for the settling of plans, as she said.

She strongly objected to my leaving.

"I am so weak, as you know, Selina; I

am not fit to be troubled with the care of such a strong, healthy fellow. Uriel seems to like it."

"Uriel thinks it very strange to stay with you, in Glynne's house, after what occurred between them," said Selina.

"Dear me! why? What shall I do about little Harry?" And "the Lady's" voice was tremulous with tears.

"Oh! she will stay, and do all she can for you, but you must make the arrangement yourself."

"I make no arrangements—I don't know how; and she learnt piquet so quickly."

"What would you wish her to do?"

"To live with me always. You know my Lord is shortly going away; and she is just the sort of person I like to have; the nicest little thing, with such a merry laugh."

"I will remain very willingly," said I.

"How nice! Then do go, my dear girls, and let me sleep a little. My Lord says he should like to have me in town for a time, before he goes to Ireland, and I am quite fatigued thinking of the journey."

So we left her ; and Selina consulted Glynne about our plans ; and it was agreed I and Neville should go home with Selina and remain there, while "the Lady" and he were in town. Then, when he went to Ireland, I should be ready to accompany her into Derbyshire, where they usually spent the winter. Harrington Court was "the Lady's" own property, and there she delighted to dwell. At times, that is ; for now and then, she was ennuyèd even there.

I did not see Glynne myself until the evening, when he again bowed to me, after the fashion of an every-day common mode of greeting. While we three conversed together, he appeared absorbed in the paper. When I played at Selina's request, he put down the paper and talked to them. A little while before we retired, he left the room, and I did not see him again, as Neville was carried into his dressing-room to bid him farewell in the morning. Selina wished to start early on account of the children, and to prevent Mr. Graham setting out the next day to join us.

So now I was happy. Once more I was restored to all I loved. The dreadful and dreaded meeting was over. I was with my Selina, as

much loved as ever, and I had my boy, my darling, my charge, all to myself. I had not before my eyes that mountain of reproof to me, that heavy weigher-down of all my feelings, for so she was, whenever I looked at her. She was like a gigantic night-mare. I wanted a little peace and time for thought and resolution. I wanted space and opportunity to pray to God, to thank Him, yet, oh! how much more to beseech the redeeming mercy of the Saviour's love, to strengthen, help, encourage me; to fill me with high purposes, singleness of heart, steady perseverance, unwavering duty. I wanted a space of time, in which to wrestle in prayer with God, that through the Divine Lover of souls I might atone for the past and live for the future.

I did not deserve the love that was given me, on my restoration to Willow Wood. My uncle said, "Thank God, child, you are returned. 'A burnt child dreads the fire.' I don't suppose you will leave us again: so sit down, be comfortable, and let me hear no more about it."

My uncle was a little sore, it seemed, by this speech. He was a man of very tender con-

science, and perhaps thought he was in some measure to blame for any strange fate occurring to his sister's child, the child left to his care. So I knelt before him, and asked for his pardon and blessing. He gave both with the tears in his eyes, and thus the past was between us two as if it had never been.

My aunt was devoured by curiosity. She must know all that had occurred to me—where I had been—with whom living. She was sure to be asked, and must have something to tell. It would look strange, not to say wrong, if she had not the whole story, correct and full, to tell her neighbours. I had to write to Isabel and my guardian. Isabel was now the Countess de Lannas, and from all accounts filled the situation well.

Also I wrote to Mrs. Bernard and Phebe, telling them all the truth.

Selina obtained their answers from me. She wished to keep them, she said.

I had a message from Lady Maria, excusing herself from an interview, as she was suffering from a severe cold, and feared I might take the infection.

Now I was to see how people lived and loved, who having journeyed through the valley of youthful hopes, and felt many things wither that they touched, had yet sown seed which was now fructifying.

Calm judgment and good common sense lay hidden in Mr. Graham's character, beneath many pretty flowers of fancy and romance. It might be the possession of a wife so fair and graceful, that made these flowers spring and flourish, but they seemed to gild their days with perpetual sunshine. Manly, straightforward, and honest, Mr. Graham was a leading man in the neighbourhood, courted and esteemed by all. Like a boyish lover at home, he crowned his Selina with roses of love every hour, and lost none of his manliness and spirit, however fond the act. He was a lover now; doubly, trebly so, to what I had seen him; yet this love seemed but to make him more diligent in every other work of life—more desirous to ennoble it, by ennobling himself—more anxious to hallow it, by good and noble deeds—more worthy the possession of it, by the gratitude he showed to the Great Bestower.

In such an atmosphere, a heart like Selina's expanded to overflowing. The remembrance of the past was no longer painful ; it was all swallowed up in the bliss of the present. She was loved, honoured, nay adored, as the Household Divinity, by one whom the general opinion of the world (and most just is the voice of the multitude, when time sanctions the first cry) had elevated to a high position among his fellow-mortals.

She began to feel that self-respect, which forbids the entrance into the heart of aught mean and worldly, while it encourages inward rectitude, and strict adherence to all that may make the soul pure and true.

With this feeling came all the train of angels' thoughts, bearing down and sweeping from before them the dust and rubbish of earthly motives ; making the pathway of the once wayward, childish Selina, bright with the deeds she performed on her journey through life—holy with the example she endeavoured to set. It was pleasant to live with these two people, encouraging each other in their different labours by the love and devotion they paid each other.

Yet vying in acts of kindness and charity—the weaker vessel steadying itself on the firm basis of the stronger one, emptying out all its sweet pity and love, in the full knowledge that the strength of mind and more tried religion of the one would absorb the superfluity, and send forth the love, pure and strong.

CHAPTER V.

" Pour out thy love like the rush of a river
Wasting its waters for ever and ever,
Through the burnt sands that reward not the giver,
 Silent or songful, thou nearest the sea ;
Scatter thy life, as the summer shower's pouring !
What if no bird through the pearl rain is soaring ?
What if no blossom looks upward adoring ?
 Look to the Life that was lavished for thee."

ANON.

THE change was not pleasant, going from the fresh, healthy atmosphere of love and sense, to " piquet."

I was necessitated to submit to great doses of " piquet"—in fact, to study that intricate game, take a diploma out in it, and master it alto-

gether, so that the pupil might outdo the teacher.

I must prove myself a superior character by some means; and if I had none other but piquet, for piquet I must be thankful. Troubled and bewildered were my thoughts, occupied in learning the character of "the Lady of Glynne."

She liked excitement. In fact, little doses of it were the only exercise she took. She was quite lively for some time after an attack made upon me, in her presence, by the nurse.

This woman accused me of being the cause why she and her coadjutor were to be dismissed. My look of half wonder, half indifference, made "the Lady" laugh: the nurse's unrefined anger had the same effect. The pleasure of the scene was soon spoilt to her by the nurse perceiving, almost immediately, that I was really ignorant of her dismissal. So she turned her anger on "the Lady." This completely altered the whole phase. What was before laughable, was now "extraordinary insolence"—what was amusing, was pronounced "insufferable impudence." "The Lady" was not to be offended with impunity. She was superior to any weakness, any

illness, when her dignity was concerned; and I was very nearly also swept away in the flood of disgrace that was poured on the woman, for venturing to suggest "she was not worth anger."

Instant dismissal, with every indignity, was not deemed sufficient punishment: messengers were sent to lodge-keepers, cottages, even the rural inn, to forbid harbouring such creatures; while characters were at once denied.

The housekeeper was sent for, to devise some scheme for retention of wages, fortunately without effect. She was wiser than I was, or knew "the Lady" better; for while she prudently knew no legal means of punishing them, she was loud in her indignation "at their howdacious conduct," and miserable in her fears for "my Lady," in "the delicate state of my Lady's health."

I found it a lucky circumstance, that in the predicament of losing both his nurses, it was not "the place" of any other person of the establishment to wait upon my boy. I did it right willingly. We lived out of reach from the gusts and squalls: he wanted me from six in

the morning until eight at night. And, in fact, I was not fitted for "the Lady's" present mood. She required the "sauce piquante" of the housekeeper's room — the highly seasoned language of those who think noise is sense.

This excitement lasted a week. First every servant was sent for, ostensibly to make enquiries as to the character of the two delinquents, but in order to have detailed to them the words and insults to which "the Lady" had been exposed; and according to the indignation and horror of the hearer, did she rise in "the Lady's" estimation. Then "my Lord" had to be written to. This was so pleasing a task, she did it all herself. Every day a dispatch was necessary, the inquiries and evidence accumulating. Then there was the expectation of "my Lord's" answers. They came duly, and were much to the purpose, though sadly too short and concise to please "the Lady." We had no intermission of "piquet," I was sorry to find; for Neville being asleep, one of "the Lady's" own maids was ordered to watch by him. Then during "piquet" was I favoured

with the day's experiences and discoveries, and shown "my Lord's" letter.

"You see, Uriel, he confides entirely in my judgment and experience, at which I am not surprised. My Lord's letter to-day is rather like yesterday, so he is quite easy in his mind."

I thought all "my Lord's" letters were pretty much alike, and they generally ran as follows:—

"Dear Miss Harrington,

"I have received your letter—noted its contents. I beg you will please yourself, in which you will please me. My blessing to my son. I remain your devoted

"GLYNNE."

The letter of this evening contained one paragraph more. "My son's new attendant will be with you on Tuesday."

"That is nice, you see," said she, as I finished it; "what a horrid point I have—would you mind changing?"

"Not at all," answered I, "but let me first see if mine is better than yours. Does Glynne always chose your servants?"

"Oh! dear no, only the child's. He is very

particular, you know, about little Harry. We very nearly once had a quarrel about it. My Lord quite forgot himself, and spoke to me in a manner—however I forgave him, though I could not look at little Harry for months, without feeling angry—ah! I see you have fourteen queens. Do you care to count them? They will make you so much ahead.”

“Not at all;—but why did you not like seeing the child? he had done nothing.”

“Why no, I suppose not, especially as he was only four months old. But it was clearly no fault of mine that his nurse gave him ‘syrup of poppies.’ I had never heard of such a thing.—Ah! you have the cards—really I am so unlucky.—It is all that detestable woman and her insolence. Penmaurice is quite afraid I shall have a bilious attack from over-exertion. However I have taken precautions——.”

But “the Lady’s” account of her “precautions” was never pleasant. In fact, if she took all the physic she said she did, I wondered she remained so well.

“I am surprised you take so much physic,” remarked I, beginning to deal again.

"It is my misfortune, my constitution is so delicate.—Would you mind my dealing this time? I hate having to put out the five cards."

"Pray take the deal, and don't take physic."

"Ha, ha! you make me laugh; do you know there is something very original about you. You are a genius, are you not?"

"I have a small talent for both music and sculpture, but to be a genius, you must, I believe, be clever in all things."

"Ah, like me. I can neither play nor sing as you do, but I know a little of everything. My father was very particular; he said 'Teach her everything, whether she likes it or not.' In fact, that intense application was the ruin of my health.—Let us change hands; mine is so odd, I cannot tell what to do with it."

The oddness of it consisted in it being a very bad one, unable to command a trick. "Do you know whom Glynne has chosen for Neville's nurse?"

"Ah, stop, say nothing, that puts me in mind I was to tell you something. It is about the nurse."

"Is she some one whom I know?"

"Yes, she is some one you know."

"But it is a very odd thing, I do not know any one fit to be Neville's nurse."

"Yes, you do, you must, my Lord said so." With that, I could learn no more. "The Lady" could not remember more.

"I was so disappointed to-day by the post."

"Why?"

"Oh! I thought certainly I should receive a letter to-day, asking me for the character of those two odious wretches. I have it by me, written in readiness. I thought it right to do it, while all the facts remained on my mind.—What! a point of fourteen! a sequence from nine to the ace. Dear me! don't let us play this hand. I will throw mine down, if you will, and begin a new deal."

"Suppose I play a little on the piano; we have had no music lately."

"Yes, do, and while you are playing, I will read over the two characters, and see if they are sufficiently strong. I have often noticed music is a great promoter of thought."

I played softly, with two intentions, one to soften down the irritable language of the characters. The other was fulfilled, "the Lady" dozed.

On Tuesday, we expected the new nurse. The moment she arrived, it was ordered that she should be shewn into "the Lady."

"I shall see at a glance, whether she at all resembles one of those insolent creatures. Though I allow my Lord a great deal of his own way, yet I cannot have impertinent creatures about me, Uriel."

"I should think he will be very careful this time."

"He will do well to be so—in fact, I should not at all wonder, if I sent her out of the house, as soon as I see her. Should you?"

"Yes, I should, very much. People often prove so different when you know them."

"Very true; who would have supposed, now, that you would have turned out what you are, one of the nicest little things——."

"But I hope you did not ever think me the contrary of nice,—"

"No, no, how droll you are. No, I always fancied you. In fact, I am much happier since you came. I feel so much better, more lively, you know. My Lord is very amiable and good, but we have not ideas in common. He cannot

comprehend mine, and no refined woman, I have heard one of my governesses say, can be expected, or indeed ought to understand a man."

"Have you many neighbours about here?"

"Oh yes, many, but it is so fatiguing returning their visits. Besides, they are not all persons with whom I can associate. If any one is entitled to choose her companions, and those fitted to be with her, I am."

"The Lady" was emerging from her lethargic habits. Indeed she was becoming thinner, and would even take a few turns on her beautiful terrace, with some pleasure, and no pain.

The excitement of the nurse's business had enlivened her greatly. But a fear was beginning to rise. It certainly was a question, whether the lethargic state was not the safest.

It was hardly possible to say, in her present state of liveliness, if some of us around her might not offend inadvertently. There was no doubt as to our fate, innocent or not.

CHAPTER VI.

"Pitch thy behaviour low, thy projects high:
So shalt thou humble, and magnanimous be.
Sink not in spirit; who aimeth at the sky
Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.
A grain of glory, mixed with humbleness,
Cures both a fever, and lethargic-ness."

HERBERT.

I WAS singing my boy to sleep, when the new nurse arrived, who, according to orders, was shewn into "the Lady" at once.

"She is very young, and seems much alarmed, Miss," said Mrs. Pinmaurice—

"Very well," I answered, a little indifferent as to hearing more.

"Will you see her, Miss Offley?"

"No, not unless she wishes it." Then remembering "the Lady's" magnificent manner, I thought if the new comer was young and timid, she might be overawed into effectual dismay. So I added, "If she likes, I will come and see her."

In the course of a quarter of an hour, I was told she waited my leisure, and I went into the nursery.

A convulsive sob smote upon my heart, as I entered and shut the door, so I went up to her, and putting my hand upon her shoulder, said,

"Do not be down-hearted, we will try to make you happy."

"Oh, Miss Nellie, Miss Nellie, and didn't you know it was me coming?"

And drawing her forth to the light, I discovered the tearful rosy face of Phebe.

"My dear, dear Phebe," said I, kissing her heartily, "what good merciful fairy sent you here."

"Then you love me still? Oh, I thought, to be sure, you would come and meet me a' the door; and when I seed rows and rows of strange

servants, I darsn't look no more. And when I was shewn into that grand room, and all the blazing lights, and my word, the biggest lady ever I seed, and no you, Miss Nell, any where, then I could hould no longer."

"Phebe, dear, I never knew you were coming. It seems extraordinary to me now, I can hardly believe it is you. Compose yourself, and do tell me this wonderful story."

I rang for her to have refreshment, and I made a great deal of her, and called her "my dear Phebe" before the servants, and so fortunately brought her to a more comfortable state of mind before I had to leave her for dinner. I showed her the young Glynne sleeping, and said if he stirred, she was to sing some of the songs I had taught her, and she was to make herself happy, and not fret until I returned to her. But my curiosity was, perforce, obliged to go unsated.

The revulsion of feeling soon took place, and from the depth of misery, I found Phebe, on my return from the dining-room, in a flush of mingled conceit and delight.

"Oh, Miss Nell, they treat me just like a

lady. I had a siller spoon to my tea, think o' that. My word, thinks I, if mother could see you sitting in this grand room, with a little lord sleeping next door, and a maid waiting on me, she would be forgetting her rubrics."

"But Phebe, who sent you here?"

"Well, he did."

"And who is he?"

"Why, the grandest man ever you seed, except he looks joost, ye ken, no happy like. He walked into church one Sabbath afternoon, taking the eyes of a' the people after him, he was that fine looking; and Mr. Grant, joost mad, ye see, wi' the people looking off their rubrics, mither and a', mind ye. And he sat down by auld Nanny Alexander, the first place he came to. And when the service was oure, he gangs, wi' his hat off his head, as if he had been joost ane o' the fishers, and Mr. Bernard, my Lord Bishop, and axes for a bit talk with him. And Mr. Grant says someat about its being the Sabbath, and ne a business day; and my word, ye should ha' seen the stranger lord, for we kenned he was nae less, look him over."

"Did he say anything?"

"Aye, he said, clear as any bell, wi' this sort o' air—

" 'And presuming it is not business.' "

Phebe's attempts to imitate Glynne's voice and manner were rather more ridiculous than sublime.

"So Mr. Grant went off, and he went into the rectory wi' Mr. and Mrs. Bernard, and he bided there three days. And, oh, my word, Miss Nell, mithers, and me, and father's joost mad about him. He said he was yer ain and very nigh nearest relation, and that they had all been wae at the loss of ye. And he had come to thank a' those who had been guid and kind till ye, and to say ye had gettun safe home, and they need never fear ye wad be ill-treat agin, as the monster, I mind not if thon's the right word, but it's some hard name, ye ken, that druv ye from home, was married the noo, and ye never need fear him mair. And he axed Mr. and Mrs. Bernard to come and see you at his house. And he gave mother a silver tea-pot, with the word 'Nellie' on the lid, that she might never forget ye—as if we should—and father a siller snuff-box; and he is to have a picture o' our

wee Lady Nellie, at his ain word. There's no holding father. And me, Miss Nell, he gave me joost twenty pound; and I was to come and live wi' you, and be the young lord's nurse. My word, if father and mother isn't prood. Such a beautiful grand man too! but, oh, the sorrowful eyes of him! And he gave Mrs. Blaize a very handsome present of money to new furnish the cottage; but she was no ways to tell anybody. And Mr. Blaize, he is ganging to get made dock-keeper, or someat good o' that sort, if he'll be tidy; and he has been that. Mr. Bernard's ganging to be his surety, ye see. Nothing that grand man did was wrang or foolish. It was the talk o' the hale village; the very childer wad rin and say, 'I kenned pretty wee Miss Nell, my lord.' And he wad stop and question them. And he has left a power of money in Mr. Bernard's hands for the church and the poor Fishers. But oh, Miss Nellie, the grandest thing of a's to tell. Ye mind how it blawed that week, and there were nae less than fifteen colliers o' the shore at oncet, and ane o' our cobles lost, wi' all on board. He has pitten a grand sum o' money into a ship-builder's hands

for to build a life-boat, and a house for her, and a sum of money to be paid as wages for her crew. And what du ye think she is to be named? Nellie; no less, and, 'deed, no name more proper. Them Grants got naething, no, but what he had a fine present for baith. But they sent them back, and said, 'they worked for the Lord, and not for hire.' And mither was mad at them. Madam Bernard was no pleased, but said, 'The present was meant kindly, as a remembrance of Nellie.' My word, Miss Nell, them folks is to be pitied as cannot see a kindly thought. And to think of your being this grand lady, with such a lord for your cousin! Eh, but mither bid me say how main vexed she was as she didn't ken afore. Father sent nae message but his duty; and he thanked the Lord his captain's child had found a home wi' him. And Miss Nell, if ye was to gang back, ye'd see how grand ye'd be welcomed, young Archie Allison to the very fore."

I had let Phebe run on. I had asked no questions; I dare not. I wished to hear more, but ought I to listen? I had, perhaps, been thinking how keenly, cruelly, Glynne had been

revenging himself by the coolness, almost contempt, with which he treated me after that first and last conversation. But this was another species of revenge ; this would be felt even deeper, yet in how different a manner.

“ Oh ! Miss Nell, I wonder ye are not oot of yerself in pride at having the love and good word o’ such a man. He is joost a prince ! And to think of me being nurse-lassie, to a young lord ! My word ! but Peggy Hutchinson cried her eyes oot. But there’s aye thing I’ll say above all, and there’s nane o’ us but thinks the same :—I’ve got back to my wee Miss Nellie, and what could be better nor that ? ”

“ And Mrs. Blaize is well ? ”

“ Aye, a sight better than any one ever saw her afore. And the lordie sat wi’ her, maist abune everybody, but Madam Bernard, and she said to him, did Mrs. Blaize—‘ Ye were a bit spirit of good about the house, and she feared, when ye gaed away, it wad leeve the pretty cottage,’ says she. Then says my lord—“ Ye have had her these three years, we want her now, and cannot spare ‘ the angel of the house.’ ”

I was summoned now again to “ the Lady ; ”

it was piquet time. Did I not think I might, with no untruth, plead a sad and sore heart, and betaking myself to bed, weep out the night? Or was it more fitting that I also should take my revenge? Pitch back the ball to Glynne, and give him act for act. Meet him with his own weapons, and while he tied my tongue with gratitude, loose his with happiness.

With the little Neville the task were easy; no matter if the other soil on which I had to work was stiffened with selfishness; the more need for stronger efforts, the greater my revenge. No trifle should be overlooked; no mountain should be esteemed too high; "piquet" should be a boon; while the uncongenial, ash-heaped hill of pompous folly should be removed bit by bit, if God pleased. It was well, in my heat of excited feelings and heart-burnings, that the "meek and lowly Jesus" rose before my eyes. Mightier than the mightiest in that weakness lay that strength. With God all things were possible. God grant me this boon.

Though it was for human vengeance, yet did this vengeance wear an aspect of heaven.

CHAPTER VII.

"Sounded then the happy glee
Of a revelling company!
Sprightly story, witty jest,
Hurried servant, greeted guest,
Flow of wine, and flight of cork,
Stroke of knife, and thrust of fork."

W. M. PRAED.

By Phebe, I had a dear letter from Mrs. Bernard. She described all that passed in that visit of three days. "My little Nellie," said the letter, "Mr. Bernard and I are pleased that we yielded to the feeling in our hearts of love and faith in you. For this great man, this lord, this specimen of God's finest work loves you with reverence. You must have commanded your kinsman's esteem, Nellie, for he proved in so many ways that his desire was to elevate you in.

the eyes of all. 'The child,' said he, 'was forced to run away; she did her best, as far as her little judgment went, to escape her fate. But how could a little innocent being expect to cope with an experienced man of the world? A man without religion, with a very poor notion of morals, and nothing but a sort of contempt for man, his follies, and meannesses, to keep him straight. This man thought the child was not in earnest, that she was pettish. At that girlish age, it was expected, nay, it was even a virtue, to see her reluctant, shy. The man loved her the better for it. He only wanted to secure her as his, get her away from evil society, bear her to other countries and places. Then he would have wooed her, as one, small it is true, but most stately in the knowledge of her own truth and worth, deserved to be wooed. She should have been surrounded with the respect and homage due to a queen. Though she had pronounced vows in his favour, he would not have touched the tips of her fingers but with her permission, and he would have only valued such favours as they grew to be marks of love. He meant to have gained that love, and not demanded it, and

as a warrior fighting for life or death, he would have won it or died.' Nellie, if he is brother to him that spoke, or in anyway like him, you must be the little Undine, born without the human heart. You are indeed one of the little spirits that have no answering thoughts of earth to mingle and exchange with any other mortal heart. I explained, that you had made no complaint, said nothing, beyond what was necessary in your self-defence, being unjustly accused. He said, 'The man made dastardly use of his power, for which the punishment decreed, by God, was such as, he hoped, would fall on no head but his own.' Mr. Bernard, my dear Nellie, thinks highly of your lordly kinsman. It is not often that a man, such as he is, would take the trouble he has done to place your name clear and unsullied before us. We loved you, as you know, my child,—now we must do more than love, and wonder how the little fragile child that came so suddenly among us, should have shewn a man's firmness and determination. For to me, there seems no greater sin than to accept rash vows. To take a solemn oath, and yet not feel its sacredness. You have done right, Nellie.

May God bless you in all you do! I would know something, dear, if so I may, of my Lord of Glynne. He is married it seems, as you are with his lady, and he wants Phebe as nurse girl for his boy. I thought, at first, when speaking so strongly of the wrong done you, 'little Nellie need not have fled from him.' Without being similar in character, I was struck, and so was Mr. Bernard, with the tone and nature of his sentiments, they seemed echoes from you. Why does he look so melancholy at times, Nellie, nay, at all times, though sometimes the black brows gloom terribly? You see how I am interested in him, and how I thus expose my feminine weakness—my curiosity. In fact, I would fain know what the Lady of Glynne is like, if my Nellie thinks it right to oblige

“ Her affectionate

“ AMELIA BERNARD.”

“ The Lady” was pleased to be pleased with Phebe. The awe-stricken fright of the country girl was gratifying after the insults of those other “wretches.” A glimmering idea as to Phebe being a foreigner (to whom she had a singular

abhorrence), disturbed her. This was on account of Phebe's north-country dialect; but she expressed herself satisfied with my explanation, that a great part of her Majesty's liege subjects were similarly afflicted with the inability to pronounce the Queen's English in the same faultless manner as "the Lady."

The place in which we lived was beautiful, though not particularly healthy, for the air was always humid, and there was nothing brisk or bracing about it.

Luckily, just as we were beginning to feel a little torpid, Glynne came home.

"The Lady" had the faculty (often possessed by small minds) of never forgetting anything. It is presumed that these minds, concentrated on one matter, become unable to take in more at a time, and it thus becomes stereotyped. So the subject of the "insolent nurses" was revived, and Glynne had it all.

I, for my part, hoped, that now he would forgive me, and speak to me, so that we might become friends once more. That is, we might be as we once were before Selina's marriage. I wanted to thank him for what he had done for

those who had been so good to me. Also I required some other conversation than "the Lady's." I felt, what with the damp air, piquet, and her conversation, that I and my ideas were all covered with blue mould.

But Glynne did not speak to me. He bowed, as usual, and then I became to him as a chair or table in the room ; scarcely as much as that, for he used them.

I thought gratitude would surely open his mouth, and make him tell me how Neville was grown and improved. So he did tell Phebe. Truly, Phebe was losing all love and admiration for me, the whole she possessed of both these qualities was wanted for "my Lord." His affection for his boy, his tenderness, gentleness with him—"Even you, Miss Nell, are not so soft and loving with him." His graciousness and urbanity to Phebe herself ; his satisfaction and content with all we did and were doing for the object of his idolatry, were all poured out to Phebe, and brought by her to me. Not that he ever sent me any message, or mentioned my name ; but still I heard enough to know he was pleased, and contented myself with that.

There was company now always in the house. And I took my proper place, as a kinswoman. Indeed such a person was required. "The Lady's" ideas of an hostess's duties consisted in fixing upon one guest, whom she fancied for some one quality she possessed more than another, and pouring out upon the favoured one the whole amount of interest she possessed in all her guests; the rest were left to amuse themselves as best they could. "The Lady's" choice did not always fall upon the most agreeable person of the party, but generally on one who was a good listener, or who had had a great number of children, or was otherwise distinguished for being nothing in particular.

Thus I had some companions, and many of them clever, agreeable people; and if some were not quite conformable, it was amusement, avoiding the subjects on which we disagreed. To me it appeared a base act, and very unworthy a fine mind, to accept a person's invitation, come to their house, eat, drink, and sleep beneath their roof, be the recipient of that English courtesy which is to be found in no other country—where a guest is admitted into the heart of a family,

into the very arena of his domestic life, into that stronghold of every feeling—an Englishman's castle—then to go hence and pass judgment thereon, exposing its secrets to foreign eyes. The amount of cross-questioning I underwent was as marvellous as it was ill-bred, and I wondered to what an extent curiosity would lead the owners of it.

"I wish you would tell me," said one lady, sprightly, witty, and wicked—that is, a flirt—"is our hostess proud or a fool?"

"She is an only child, and also an heiress."

"What am I to infer from that, Miss Offley?"

"Put yourself in her place, and think what you would be."

"I should take care to be very different from her, I can assure you."

"Yes, you would be very gay, have equipages, horses, diamonds, company without end, and flirt with everybody."

"Ah! I see you are satirical. There is no harm in a little innocent flirtation. I want greatly to get up one with our host."

"Have you tried?"

"No: I waited to find out what sort of

woman his wife is. I do not wish to make her unhappy, you know."

"That is very considerate of you."

"Yes : I know many people who never think of the wife for a moment—in fact, rather enjoy her annoyance."

"I suppose that enhances the pleasure."

"I wonder if they are a happy couple, my Lord and Lady?"

"I never hear them disagree."

"Do you live with them always?"

"I do so now."

"And what relation are you to them? I never saw or heard of you before."

"A species of cousin to my Lord."

"Oh, then, you don't care what I may say of her."

"Yes, I do rather."

"Well, I cannot help it, if you do. I dislike her."

"Why do you visit her, then?"

"Heavens ! my dear girl, what an innocent you are ! I visit people for the sake of their house, not themselves. Though I admire my Lord. There is some odd story about his having been married before ?"

"Is there?"

"Then you know nothing about it?"

"I never saw but this wife."

"You may rely upon it, what I have heard is true. He wished to marry some little strange girl, a protégée of his mother's."

"I am the little strange girl."

"Heavens! how you startle one! Then it cannot be true. You must have been almost a baby at that time."

"I presume so."

"How people talk! Tell me, is not Lady Maria a very strange woman?"

"Do you mean mad, or odd-looking?"

"I mean neither. Now you know what I mean. We never see her here, and no one ever alludes to her. Is she quite correct and proper?"

"You had better ask her husband."

"Ah! that's it—yes. I recollect now—she deceived him. He was a very young man, and engaged to her daughter. They were married at Malta; and, taking advantage of the twilight, she put on her daughter's dress, and went an hour before the daughter was to have gone, and

got married to him fast and sure. They were exactly alike, as far as mother and daughter could be. And the daughter went mad and drowned herself."

"She was looking very well about three months ago, notwithstanding these terrible things."

"How--what can you mean?"

"Miss Glynne that was, Mrs. Graham that is, Lady Maria's daughter."

"Oh! she is married, is she? Then, for goodness' sake, do not repeat that Malta story, or you will get into a scrape. I had it from one of Captain Forest's brother officers, who can tell you the whole story. Our hostess seems very fond of you. I can assure you, the house would be unbearable without you."

"You flatter me."

"Not at all—we all of us say so. We used to sit after dinner ages, simply because my Lady appeared not to know it was her place to move. Now you remind her—very proper. What is that odd name my Lord calls her? It sounds like Harriet."

"It's a pet name, I believe."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life, within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

TENNYSON.

So the winter passed away. It was lucky that I had Phebe to carry out my plans regarding little Neville; for I knew she would execute them to the letter of the law. "The Lady" did not seem able to rise out of bed in the morning without consulting "Uriel." Glynne went to and fro, sometimes with us, sometimes hunting. Selina and Richard paid us a visit.

"What wonders you are performing here, Nellie! I found Eliza working," said Selina.

"Oh, yes, we do many more wonderful things than that. We get up in time to go to church now on Sunday morning."

"Richard has been visiting the poor people. They talk gratefully of 'the Lady' and all she has done for them this winter."

"Yes, I dare say she would have done it before, if she could have imagined poverty so great, that people could not buy what they required."

"You put it into her head, then?"

"Her father was here for a month, and he took a fancy to me, and I used to tell him what I should do, if I was a rich woman, and he used to go and tell his daughter. You know he is a most pompous sort of golden goose, Selina, gobble-obling at anything."

"I only saw him at Glynne's marriage, when he wept so, I did not know whether to pity or laugh at him."

"If I was a real queen, Selina, I should order all persons with great riches to spend a year or two of their lives in poverty—just to be able to let them see things as others see them. Riches

stagnate everything, I am sorry to say, and I don't wonder at rich men's chance of heaven being so small."

"But if they use their riches rightly, think, Nellie, what happiness, what good one could do! No stagnation lurks about the heart of one who spends liberally, yet wisely. If we had one hundred pounds now."

"You have it, there."

"You little, mad Nellie—"

"Not at all: I am very rich, my money has accumulated so. I have as much more—see!"

"I will ask Richard—"

"Very well."

"He may think you ought to spend it here."

"He won't. That's Glynne's, or rather his wife's duty."

"You are going to have a new clergyman, Richard says."

"Are we?"

"Yes—a Mr. Grant."

"Oh! heavens!" said I, startled out of all propriety.

"Yes, he is a connexion of Mr. Harring-

ton's, and has been long promised the living. Do you know him, Nellie? You don't seem pleased."

I am sorry to say, I was not pleased.

"Is he married?" asked I, dolefully.

"Yes, and has three or four children."

"When do they come?" said I, yet more dolefully.

"Come! they have arrived. That is how Richard knew, seeing them do so."

"Then we must begin to conduct ourselves with propriety. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I remember now I heard they were coming to Derbyshire."

"You seem to know them, Nellie, and not to like them."

"I know them—I have known them for three years. They are very good."

"I see, Nellie, they are so good, they are too good for you. I break the tenth commandment at once, and wish we had this living."

"No—you need not break the commandment. You may wish you had one like it. Did you never get your living, that the old Lord of Glynne promised you?"

"Yes, we did ; but it was in a town, and I was very ill, we could not live there."

"So you are just as you were."

"We are very happy, Miss Nellie ; we only want that hundred pounds for the church."

"Oh, of course ; pride and poverty go together."

"You are an impudent little thing. However, take this kiss."

That day I taught Neville a new lesson, to repeat to his papa, and it was this—

"Nellie thinks that the five thousand pounds left to her, might buy uncle Graham a living, because old uncle Glynne promised him one."

When Neville came back to me, he said papa taught boy a lesson.

"That five thousand pounds shall buy uncle Graham a living. He was pleased it should be so spent." And the little darling waved his hand in the most lordly manner, in imitation of his father, as he repeated the sentence again.

"And what did you do then, my boy?" I asked by way of nothing but to hear his pretty little voice.

"Me said me had money, and me would buy my Nellie a living."

"Nellie does not want one, she only wishes to live with her boy."

"Nellie and boy go away."

"Don't you love Harrington Court?"

"No."

"Did you tell papa?"

"Papa thinks boy better go with Nellie."

I was afraid to ask more. It was very evident that Neville and his mamma were not on good terms this day. Indeed, he never was either affectionate or dutiful, which must be placed mostly to the account of 'the Lady.' Her fits of fondness for the boy were about as hard to bear as her fits of irritation, and he was equally averse to either. Naughty little Neville, where he picked up some words, that he uttered, when in his passions, it is hard to say. Had I been on speaking terms with Glynne, I might have remonstrated; as it was, I could only say,—
"Hush!"

"Papa says them."

"But not to mamma,"—a pause.

"Boy say then, mamma fat, fat woman. Boy not like fat."

It will be seen the young Glynne was by no means perfect. But Phebe and I hoped all things, and loved beyond that. Yet did we not spoil him. He was too precious for that.

"I would have played piquet all day, my Neville, sooner than lose your sweet kiss night and morning, your little loving words, 'where boy's Nellie, Phebe?'"

Mr. Graham was very good to me, and said—

"I can say to you what Selina cannot, Nellie; namely, that her brother has made a sad mistake in his marriage. I conclude he thought that being a sweet-tempered sort of quiet person, 'the Lady' would not jar with any of his feelings. But until you came, it was as much as he could do to bear with her. He has, unfortunately, no reliance on religious consolation and love: he relies upon himself. That has been the bane of his character throughout. He would never complain, not even when irritated to the utmost, and my innocent wife can hardly comprehend what it is, for even a common character to live with a silly woman. Every month I saw a change in him for the worse; and but for the child, I believe he never would have remained at home. Now the change is the other way, and

I think is due to you, for the pains you are taking with that poor woman. For we must remember she has had the most difficult life of all before her. One of uninterrupted prosperity. We do not know what she might have been had she been favoured as we have. Glynne's brows are unbending,—that is why Selina gives you her extra kiss every night, and why I never forget to beseech God to bless the darling little Nellie's efforts. He is happy about his boy, happier about his wife ; he will enter now with some heart into his public duties, because—”

“ Nay, you are too lenient, too indulgent to my faults. I have a debt to pay Glynne. What do I not owe to both Selina and him ?”

“ Be it so, Nellie ; God is very good, making us dependent on one another. And it is in that light I have accepted your gift of one hundred pounds for the church. I do not know if it is to you or Miss Seymour that we owe the discovery of my Selina's gift of poesy. But that has brought in a little help.”

“ Has it indeed, and Selina never told me !”

"The use of it has been a great boon to her in her long hours of weakness, diverting her from both pain and loneliness, besides bringing us in some money."

"I shall ask Selina why she has not presented me with a beautiful green and golden book, her monogram emblazoned thereon."

"Pray do anything to make her happy and cheerful. It weighed on her spirits your loss. She thought herself in part answerable for it. But you must forgive her, Nellie; for you know how she loved Glynne. And the little eccentricities of your character, (for you are an eccentric little thing, child), she was aware, would suit him better than the stately ways of an accomplished and highly-born lady, educated to the tips of her fingers, and steeped to the lips in fashion and learning. I really think he liked Miss Harrington the better, because she was not clever,—too innocently simple to hide the truth,—that truth he so worships."

And there rose up the sound in my ears of those memorable words of the old love-song,—but I would not listen even to the murmur of imagination.

"Glynne will become religious for the sake of his boy," I said.

"Through the means, not for the sake of his boy, I hope, Nellie. Glynne's conversion must be caused by conviction."

CHAPTER IX.

“Oh ! yet we trust that some-how good
Will be the final goal of ill—
To pangs of nature—signs of will,
Defect of doubt, and taint of blood ;
That nothing walks with aimless feet,
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.”

TENNYSON.

So my revenge was progressing.

It gave me naughty and wrong qualms on Sunday, hearing the mournful sing-song voice of Mr. Grant. I never could understand why it was necessary to read in such a sad, monotonous manner. I liked Mr. Bernard's clear tones, joyful with praise, coming from heart as well as lips, solemn with awe, as he spoke of man's sinfulness, cheerful with hope as he read of God's

mercy, glowing with fervent gratitude when the Divine Saviour was the theme. I loved to hear that voice modulated from the heart. It carried you with it in prayer and praise; it was irresistible in its power to keep your attention; it made you devout with the earnestness of its tones.

Mr. and Mrs. Grant appeared highly surprised, not to say pleased, to see me. He said it was providential that two of his flock were restored to him, meaning Phebe and myself; and no doubt the reason of it would be fully shown ere long.

I promised to come and see them the next day. At present "the Lady" waited for me. "Stay!" said Mr. Grant, "is that the Lady of Glynne?"

"Yes."

"Who lives up there on the hill, scarcely a quarter of a mile from the church?"

"Yes."

"Why does she use her carriage on Sunday?"

"Because she chooses."

"This must be altered!" said Mr. Grant, severely, as to himself.

"Now," thought I, "what is to be done to prevent this pig-headed man from doing incalculable mischief for such a trifle? If he offends 'the Lady,' she will neither forgive or forget it." And I sat mournfully down by her side in the carriage.

"Are those people friends of yours, Uriel?" asked she.

"Yes," I answered, "I have known them a long time; but they are your cousins."

"My cousins! how can that be possible?"

"Their name is Grant. I have understood, if anything occurred to you and Neville, they would become the possessors of Harrington Court."

"Good heavens, how disagreeable! I wish you would not associate with them, Uriel. It seems so shocking of them coming here to watch and see how soon they may get it."

"I am sure that is the last thing they wish. They are worthy, conscientious people; and as the living is in your gift, it was natural that you should bestow it upon a relation rather than a stranger. Besides, you and Neville are younger than they are, and look sufficiently healthy to

put an end to any such hopes, if they have them."

"I shall take very good care to assure them that I mean to live as long as possible. I suppose I ought to call on them."

"Even if they were not your cousins, it would be only right, I believe, to be courteous to the clergyman of the parish."

"Of course, so we ought. If the aristocracy of the country do not uphold the church, so papa says, who will? They will be much gratified by a visit from me, Uriel; when shall we go?"

I did not like to tell "the Lady" that from what I remembered of the Grants, they would probably be highly gratified by the visit of some shining pillar of the church, some member of it, dignified or not with honours, yet steeped to the lips with the most elevated doctrines of tractarianism, but would see in her nothing more than a common mortal; perhaps think it right to be less civil and ceremonious to her than to some old woman who came for a bit of flannel for her "rheumatiz."

We settled she should call in a few days, as

they might be still in some confusion, while I should go the next day and inform them of her intentions. Meantime I thought it best to prepare "the Lady" for their peculiar views. I hinted that Mr. Grant was very particular. She was delighted; she was particular herself.

"Also Mrs. Grant is very strict," I continued.

"Very proper! If the clergyman's wife is not strict, whom then could they hope to be strict?"

I suggested that their powers would be much crippled, and their efforts to do good much circumscribed, if they were not assisted by my Lord and Lady of Glynne.

"Of course, I shall make a point of being quite their friend and adviser. I shall tell my Lord that the whole of the parish being ours, we ought to set the example of patronizing and upholding the clergyman and his wife, without considering that they are relations."

Having established this idea firmly in the Lady's mind, I was aware it would take a great deal of uncompromising behaviour on Mr. Grant's part to efface it.

The next day I knew I should have a more difficult task to guide the Grants into a smooth mode of proceeding.

After a few preliminaries on both sides, Mr. Grant began—

“I thought you would have shown some fruit after being under my ministry for three years, and represented the sin of using a carriage to come to church so short a distance.”

“What is physically impossible cannot be done,” answered I, shortly. “‘The Lady’ must either stay at home or come in a carriage.”

“Why?”

“Because she cannot walk.”

Mr. Grant was so far a person easy to deal with, that if you gave him a simple reason, he never questioned it. Now, though for a moment the idea might run through his mind, “Has she only one leg, or no legs, that she cannot walk?” he never thought of putting the question aloud; it was enough—“she could not walk.” With the “wherefore” he had nothing to do.

“But why need you accompany her?—the example remember!” This was a much more

important question, for he knew I had two feet, and could walk very well.

"Because she must have some one with her."

This was mysterious, but not the less to be believed and left unquestioned. Mr. Grant was a man of very delicate mind, and most prudent in not asking for information on mysterious, yet at the same time simple, facts.

"I hope the people are well aware of this fact."

"Oh dear, yes! I feel certain not one of them but would feel more amazement at seeing her walking than driving."

So the subject of the carriage was happily disposed of.

My next observation was unfortunate.

"'The Lady' is coming down to call on you, Mrs. Grant, the first day you will give her permission. As she has lived here all her life, and it is her property, she is anxious to help you and Mr. Grant, and will give you information about the people."

"That I can never permit," said Mr. Grant. "I form my own judgments wherever I go. I can take no opinion from another."

"Ah me!" thought I, "this man is as silly in his way as 'the Lady' in hers."

It was useless trying to undo the mischief. Mr. Grant had got the idea into his head "the Lady" wished to influence him; and stay there I knew it would.

"We were intending to call ourselves this afternoon at the court," said Mrs. Grant.

I had to ask myself before I answered, what effect this would have on "the Lady?" I thought she would think it rather presuming; nevertheless she might take it very differently. So I was constrained to let matters pass, merely saying—"Are you not very busy?"

"Our business is to become acquainted with our parishioners."

"'The Lady' drives out at three."

"You must inform her we are coming."

"She is ordered to drive at that hour by her doctor."

Connecting this with the fact of the want of legs, Mr. Grant discreetly said, "Oh then we will call to-morrow morning." But Mrs. Grant said, "Nellie, I am afraid you stand in awe of so great a lady. This must not be."

Fortunately the visit passed off well. All were so full of their own consequence, none perceived that they were talking of, and not to, each other. And all were so full of the duties that ought to be done, would be done, and had been done, that none perceived but little was done. All the conversation was of the parish, which was good in itself; and while "the Lady" detailed how anxious she was to co-operate in good deeds, they declared their happiness was great at having such a coadjutor.

Mrs. Grant whispered to me, as I handed them out, she did not wonder I was full of my Lady, she was a most loveable person; while Mr. Grant, who never whispered, and who never spoke his mind before servants, contented himself with squeezing my hand, and saying oracularly, as if he was giving out a text, "I am pleased."

If they were so, it is needless to say "the Lady" was charmed. She had told them this, told them that, and expressed her opinions, and the reflection of her self-approbation beamed back upon them in the brightest hues. These feelings did not diminish on more communica-

tion, which surprised me. Nevertheless I ought to have remembered, that there is a natural sympathy between certain people. And other causes contributed to cement a great friendship between "the Lady" and the Grants. She, as I have intimated before, was beginning to taste the pleasure of a little business or excitement. She was becoming alive to the delights of patronage; of feeling she was useful, doing good. Before, she had certainly known the pleasure of being a great lady and of great consequence, but that was the effect of accident; it was not her own doing. Now, she was not only a great lady, but useful, consulted, wanted, and this was all her own work. The gratification, not to say vanity, engendered by this thought, spurred her to fresh action.

While the Grants, acting upon the principle of being guided by no judgment, save their own, derived little advantage from the past experience of others.

Many people hinted, or said openly—disparaging things of "the Lady," such as hoping this fit would last, or blessing God she was under good influence, and other remarks, which might

have plainly, yet not unkindly, warned them a little.

But so far from having this effect, they saw, with their own eyes, a lady, rich, and bountiful, actuated by the best motives, anxious to do good, surrounded by the most ungrateful people, her very favours and charities received with doubt and wonder.

So, of course, their judgment being unimpeachable, "the Lady" was looked on by them as a martyr, and being placed up in this position by themselves, it was likely to be some time before they could dethrone her, if ever.

In addition to this, I offended them seriously, and the lower I progressed, the higher her virtues shone.

Indeed, without knowing it, she was beginning to see with Grant-ish eyes, talk with Grant-ish tongue.

But we still had piquet, and over it she discoursed à la Grant.

"Uriel, I must say, I think Mrs. Grant has reason to be angry with you. She tells me you have absolutely refused to go and visit the poor people. I think you shall deal this time, for a change."

"It is not my duty to visit the people, it is hers. I have to attend to Neville."

"But he is such a baby. Phebe is quite enough for him. I won't put out five, you do it."

"I know Mrs. Grant very well. She is very exacting, and would finally end in making me female curate to her husband."

"And a very proper situation too. One ought to do good, while one can, Uriel. No one knows when one may be called away."

"I have fourteen aces," interrupting her abruptly. Somehow those solemn sentences never sounded well, out of "the Lady's" mouth.

"How provoking!" she exclaimed pettishly, "Don't count them, however."

CHAPTER X.

“Droopnot, though shame, sin, and anguish areround thee;
Bravely fling off the cold chain that hath bound thee;
Look on yon pure Heaven smiling beyond thee:
Rest not content in thy darkness—a clod.
Work for some good—be it ever so slowly;
Cherish some flower—be it ever so lowly;
Labour! all labour is noble and holy;
Let thy great deeds be thy prayer to thy God.”

FRANCIS OSGOOD.

It will be observed, in that last scene between “the Lady” and I, the horizon of her favour was declining towards me. In reality, Mrs. Grant was taking my place. It was now Easter; after that period, we were to go to town for the season. And though I was not sorry to be relieved of some of my duties by Mrs. Grant, yet “the Lady” was one who required her ideas enlarged to the utmost extent. It was needful

she should be made to feel she had brothers and sisters in the furthest hemisphere; that there were unknown, boundless, countless worlds, up in the stars; that people were as innumerable as sand on the sea-shore, and she was an atom, floating about in illimitable space, with nothing particular to distinguish her from any other atom.

Instead of which, under the Grant-ish system, there was but one world—the limit of her landed possessions, of which she was queen—but one parish of which Mr. Grant was the owner, ruler, prime minister—but one set of ideas and opinions, and those were his, on which hers were grafted.

Easter arrived, and Glynne appeared at Harrington Court.

Mr. Grant never allowed himself, if possible, to be surprised at church. He was so absorbed always in his own peculiar duties, that he had no time to trace mundane affairs to a reasonable source.

When, therefore, he perceived the distinguished stranger whom he had once seen before, handing “the Lady” into church, nature would be surprised, all he could do.

On Monday, Mrs. Grant came to enquire reasons and wherefores.

"There are not two Lords of Glynne," said I, in answer to her questions. "I thought you knew it was the same."

"'The Lady' never told me that he had been to our village."

"Probably she does not know it."

"Nellie, you do not mean to say he would hide from her so important a journey."

"Did you think it important? My cousin probably tells her all that he thinks would interest her."

"Your cousin! I thought 'the Lady' was your cousin."

"So she is, by marrying my Lord."

"Nellie, where is the man to whom you were to have been married, and from whom you ran away?"

Now, this was a most unlucky question put at an unlucky sharp moment of Mrs. Grant's brain.

I became red, I know, but more from surprise, than any other feeling. I answered quietly, though reddening deeper, at the sort of subterfuge it implied, "He is married."

Mrs. Grant wished me good morning, with a portentous calmness.

It seems she went from my room to "the Lady's."

In the course of the afternoon, I received a laconic epistle from Mr. Grant.

"DEAR MISS OFFLEY,

"I desire that you come down to our house immediately, and remain there, until you can find another home. As your minister, I command your obedience.

"Yours,

"EDWARD GRANT."

I returned a verbal answer by the bearer, saying that I was obliged for his kind invitation, but that I could not leave home at present.

Early the next morning, before Neville and I had finished breakfast, Mrs. Grant was ushered in.

"You do not seem to have understood Mr. Grant's letter yesterday, or to know the frightful discovery I made."

"No."

"I must see you alone, then."

"Phebe, give my boy one piece of toast more, while I speak to Mrs. Grant."

"Grant go away—boy have his own Nellie."

"Neville is a gentleman: he bows to ladies, and lets them have their own way."

Neville accordingly bowed, in silence; but as we left the room he said to Phebe,

"Boy not like Grant, Phebe."

When alone, said Mrs. Grant to me,

"Conceive my horror and dismay at discovering, yesterday, you are living in the very house, under the very roof, of the man who wished to marry you."

"It does seem rather odd," I answered.

"Then leave it immediately."

"Excuse me."

"Can you not conceive the indelicacy and impropriety of it?"

"No; he is married now."

"Ah! that is the very sin of it. Living with that confiding creature, whom I must acknowledge, with every disposition to do her best and perform her duty, is not as wise as we could wish: how could you do it, Miss Offley?"

"As she wished me to live with her, and as

she knows everything, I do not see why others need be troubled."

"But you must have taken advantage of her innocence. I felt, when she was so guilelessly and frankly telling me the whole truth, I had never seen such injured virtue before; and I could not think of you, without the greatest disgust. As for my Lord, I trust never to see that abhorred face again."

"Phebe," said I, calling, "show Mrs. Grant down stairs, and ask Pinmaurice when I can see 'the Lady.'"

"Cousin," said I, when I was admitted, a few hours after, "Mrs. Grant has been with me this morning."

"Has she really? Do you know she was with me for two hours yesterday, asking me all sorts of questions about you and my lord. I told her all I knew, and she pitied me very much. I suppose she wished to hear more."

"No; she wishes me to leave you, because it is improper, my living here with Glynne."

"Impossible, Uriel. What am I to do without you?"

"Will you call upon her, and tell her your own wishes?"

"To be sure, so I will. It is absurd, quite absurd. Between you and me, Uriel, she is getting rather tiresome. She gave me some advice the other day, about spending so much money on one dress. Pinmaurice tells me she is very interfering."

"She wishes to do her duty, cousin, but is not often sensible about it. That is her greatest fault. So farewell for the present."

But I left too soon. "The Lady" sent for my Lord, and was in the act of telling him the story, when Mr. and Mrs. Grant were announced.

Mr. Grant at first had asked for me, and I was sent for, and appeared before any other remark had been made.

Then began Mr. Grant.

"I think it my duty, as minister of this parish, and the person appointed by God to watch over your souls, to remonstrate upon the committal of a most glaring impropriety."

GLYNNE (bowing). Proceed, Sir; (for he paused.)

MR. GRANT. It is not unknown to me, your

history, and yours—(turning first to me, and then to Glynne.)

GLYNNE. Miss Harrington, had you not better advise Miss Offley to retire?

MR. GRANT (hastily). Wherefore? It is to reprove and expose her that I have come.

GLYNNE. The Lady of Glynne, Sir, as a lady, is tenacious of her sex's honour; and I, as a man, have a natural antipathy to seeing a woman insulted.

NELLIE (to "the Lady"). Cousin, I will go into the conservatory, and you can call me if I am wanted.

THE LADY (with the importance of one in a very peculiar and interesting situation). Quite right, my dear Uriel.

Now in the conservatory, unluckily, I could hear every word, as well as see them all; but as there was no escape, I thought it best to be content that I was not insulted in bodily presence.

MR. GRANT. My Lord, you were once engaged, and about to be married, to Miss Offley.

GLYNNE (in a voice that seemed almost to stir the leaves of the plants). I was.

MR. GRANT. And yet she is here, living in your house.

GLYNNE. I am of a forgiving disposition, it seems.

MR. GRANT. It is not that; it is the monstrous impropriety of it.

GLYNNE. I grieve not to be able to understand Mr. Grant.

MR. GRANT. Suppose it should be known—get abroad—what would people say?

GLYNNE. I am not aware that it is a secret.

MR. GRANT. Then the more need no handle should be given to any scandal.

GLYNNE. May I ask of what nature?

MR. GRANT. If I speak of things my soul abhors, I do it only as a part, a terrible, sad part, of my sacred profession. People may say, my Lord, that you have brought Miss Offley to live with an innocent, unsuspecting wife, to please yourself—

GLYNNE. Presuming that thus you would act, under similar circumstances.

MR. GRANT. God forbid!

GLYNNE (bowing reverently). God forbid! I say also.

There was a pause. At last Mr. Grant said, hesitatingly, "My Lord, in my endeavours to prevent any open sin and scandal, I am necessarily liable to error. I have a sacred charge committed to my trust. My people must be guided by my voice—I am answerable for them."

GLYNNE. I conclude that in this instance they can form but one opinion. As Miss Offley refused to be my wife, it is not likely she would wish to be, what, I leave your fertile imagination to say.

MR. GRANT. That is very true; but still we are all liable to misconception. The very act of merely speaking to her—

GLYNNE. That is easily avoided.

MR. GRANT. My Lord, impossible. Human nature is weak.

GLYNNE. Yours must be remarkably so. I trust you will derive satisfaction from hearing I have not spoken to Miss Offley since the day I first knew she was an inmate of my house.

MR. GRANT. Then you must have been aware, you must have known, the nature of your feelings.

GLYNNE. Sir, I was aware that there are Mr. Grants in the world. If Miss Offley was forgiving and amiable enough, after my conduct to her, to live with this lady as friend and companion, it was my part to see that she suffered not from any conduct of mine—that she should have an honoured, comfortable, happy home in the house of that kinsman, who had to make every reparation for depriving her of home and kindred at an age when she most required it. It was also a duty on my part to let no stain rest on her name; which, whether it is Moss or Offley, you ought to know was dignified in her possession.

MR. GRANT. It is true—so far that is true. It was my duty——

GLYNNE. Sir, your duty at present consists in going home, and asking pardon of that God, whose attributes you know not, and cannot understand.

MRS. GRANT. My Lord, you forget to whom you are speaking. Your minister is in the place to you of God.

GLYNNE. Madam, I make over to you my share in Mr. Grant's ministration.

MR. GRANT. My Lord, a lady should be treated with courtesy, not mockery.

GLYNNE. I believe we are indebted to her for this discussion.

MR. GRANT. Yes. Her devotion to the cause of virtue is great.

GLYNNE. The titles of woman and lady belong not to such oracles of virtue. Good morning.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Take heart,—the Master builds again,
A charmed life old Goodness hath ;
The tares may perish, but the grain
Is not for Death.

“ God works in all things ; all obey
His first propulsion from the night.
Ho ! wake and watch, the world is grey
With morning light.”
WHITTIER.

I SAW, through the glass doors of the conservatory, that he bowed them out of the room. So I entered as the door closed.

“ An oracle of virtue,” said “ the Lady.”
“ I really think she is, my Lord. She feels for me very much.”

“ Does she ?”

“ Yes, for my peculiar position.”

“ Well, Miss Harrington, I cannot boast of having many feelings in common with the Oracle of virtue, otherwise I might say, she was labouring under the desire to make a fool of you.”

“ That, as you well know, is impossible, my Lord. In fact, though I quite allow for yours and Uriel’s feelings of indignation, I cannot forget it was wholly for my sake that the Grants came forward in the manner they have done.”

“ I am sorry to confess I had no feelings of indignation until now, my dear Miss Harrington. What part of my conduct to you has deserved the censure of your amiable friends ?”

“ You never thought of what was due to my position.”

“ Allow me to remedy the defect. I am all attention to your orders.”

But “ the Lady” had advanced a little beyond her depth, she, therefore, took refuge in generals.

“ They have been actuated solely by the best motives, that you must allow. They derived no benefit themselves.”

"I fear very much the reverse in many ways."

"Then you must acknowledge they were disinterested."

"In point of pecuniary motives I think so."

"But what motive could they have, my Lord?"

"Heaven guard me from the task of investigating the governing laws of such minds. My beloved Miss Harrington, I should be swamped in a sea of mud, choked with ashes—you would lose me for ever."

"Oh, my lord, cease,—don't alarm me so,—my nerves are not strong."

"Then promise I shall have no more Grant scenes, and I will consent to remain in the bosom of my family."

"You must remember that they are our spiritual advisers; we must submit to them—be advised by them." "The Lady" had only half her lesson off by rote.

"Perhaps Mrs. Grant wishes to be your bosom friend, instead of your present companion."

"She certainly advised it: she, moreover,

promised that I should only derive benefit from the change."

Glynne bowed.—"A little, a slight degree of worldly wisdom must be imputed to the Oracle of Virtue. But it renders a disagreeable task I had given myself to do more bearable." He paused. Then turning to me, the words coming from between his lips like the soft, rolling notes of an air unknown but yet familiar—some music cherished but forgotten—

"Nellie, my mother is very ill. It is not fit she should be left only to the care of servants. Her nature is not changed. I know you like work none the less if 'tis disagreeable. You seem to have done all you can here; perhaps, you will now try her."

"I can do so, if you wish it," I began; "but, ——" "my boy," I was about to add—

"I have taken a large house for her at Brighton. I do not like little Neville to be so many months in town. Tell me, my Lady, shall Neville go there with Nellie, and she can nurse my mother at the same time?"

"The Lady" was sometimes subject to fits of ill-temper.

"Certainly not. How can you expect, for one moment, that I will be separated a day from my darling child, an only son. And Lady Maria's disease may be infectious. She never paid me any attention, and I certainly shall not put myself out of the way for her."

"I had better go, then, alone," I began.

"Oh! please yourself, do not think of me—I am the last person to be considered, it seems."

"Just so, in a matter of rather more than life and death to another," replied Glynne, in his coldest voice.

"I shall have Mrs. Grant though," said "the Lady."

"And your humble servant," remarked Glynne.

"Oh! then I shall do very well. You may go as soon as you like, Uriel."

I went up stairs, and took my boy in my arms. It would not do to show my own grief. It was necessary to fill that riotous, but most loving, heart with as much fortitude as one could expect so young a child to imbibe.

"Neville, your papa has a mamma, like you."

"Is she fat, fat?"

"No, she is thin, thin; she is very ill."

"Take nasty stuff?"

"No, she is too ill. Papa says Nellie must go and nurse her."

"Nellie and boy?"

"No, boy must stay at home; because he laughs and makes a noise."

"Boy never laugh; stay in Nellie's potet."

This was a grand effort to say pocket.

"But papa wants boy, to love and play with."

"Boy's Nellie come back," said the little fellow, after a pause, in which he seemed to weigh well the whole matter; yet his lip quivered.

"Phebe will write every day to Nellie, and say how boy is. If he is good, Nellie will sing; if he is naughty, Nellie will cry."

"Mustn't cry, Nellie, boy be good as ever can; no mind fat head."

Fat head was a sore subject, and was his own rather inelegant, not to say inappropriate, name for head-ache. In all the scrapes he fell into with his mamma, they ended in his being dismissed for giving her a head-ache, which was

represented to him as a crime of murderous tendency.

The boy was so intelligent, Phebe and I spent hours discussing his wonderful qualities. Though Phebe mourned over my departure, it was not so violently as in days gone by. She had our boy, and I saw took upon herself an instant accession of dignity at having him all to herself; besides a vision of pride rushing through her, as to the prospect of showing him to me again, more lovely and charming than ever.

Also, she had a very good spirit, and was not disposed to be "put on" by any of the rest of the servants. And if it so happened, was there not "my Lord!" Phebe was well persuaded, and I believe with truth, my Lord would sooner be insulted himself, than suffer her to be so.

Fortified with all this, she helped me to pack with much composure.

I had scarcely finished, and was preparing to go down to dinner, when the door opened, and Mrs. Grant appeared.

"Nellie, are you really going?" she asked.

I thought it safest not to answer. It was an undoubted fact that I was very cross.

"You will be glad in the end, Nellie, that you have sacrificed everything to principle."

Thought I, "Is this woman mad or silly?" I concluded it was best to think her the last.

"Mr. Grant and I shall always feel pleased to see you again, Nellie. You have realised all his ideas of female propriety. You go with his approbation."

"Mrs. Grant," said I, with every nerve tingling in a most unaccountable manner, and which I suppose was rage, "once before, you made me speak to you as I never spoke to mortal. Now, I tell you plainly, we meet no more with my consent. It was never meant by God that we were to be mocked with the foolery you and your husband call Religion. God defend me from meeting such again."

I heard her echo my word, "foolery," in a tone that proved to me I had placed the culminating stone on the pile of my sins. I had not time to deprecate her wrath, for the gong sounded the last summons to dinner, and I ran down

stairs as fleetly as if some evil thing was pursuing me.

"The Lady" was still in high bad humour. Glynne was very kind, chatting away just as in days gone by.

"I do not think you can tell Mr. Grant now, that you have never spoken to Uriel since she came into this house. You have talked to her all dinner."

"Partly because my dear Miss Harrington would not vouchsafe me a word, and partly because, as long as there are Mr. Grants in this world, it is of no use doing your best to be virtuous. They'll put a bad construction on the blowing of your nose."

"My Lord, I beg you will remember to whom you are speaking, and I also wish you to understand Mr. Grant is a friend of mine, as well as relation."

"Far be it from me to deprive you of such a friend; keep him all, I'll none of him."

"That is the matter of which I complain, my Lord. He is your clergyman, you ought to be friends, he is anxious to do you good."

"I have seen no anxiety on his part yet; he

has only blackened my name with the foulest crime—”

“He did not mean you did it; he only implied that others would think so.”

“God forbid I should have the like opinion of my fellow creatures; I have too good an opinion of human nature. I thought the fellow an ass, but upon my word he is a sort of an ass I should be sorry to kick, for fear I—”

Here Glynne proved, I am grieved to say, that he had forgotten none of his old uncle's lessons in strong language.

“My Lord, I will not be insulted.”

“My Lady, I am in a passion.”

“My Lord, I am ashamed of you.”

“My Lady, I am ashamed of myself. Nellie, give us some music, to soother us over.”

CHAPTER XII.

“ From the ingrained fashion
Of this earthly nature
That mars thy creature ;
From grief, that is but passion ;
From mirth, that is but feigning ;
From tears, that bring no healing ;
From wild and weak complaining ;
Thine old Strength revealing,
Save, oh, save.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

It is sad to awake in the morning with eyes more heavy from grief than when they closed down with sleep ; and to feel the weight growing lower from head to heart, as each perception unfolds itself from the dreams of night to the realities of day. It appeared to me that I was at once degraded, and rightly so. I had had some of Mrs. Grant's thoughts and ideas : I was

not wholly innocent. I was a wretch—unworthy to be entrusted with any high or noble work, unfitted to do the deeds that had been placed before me. So I took the pangs that assailed me straight into my heart, that they might use their stings without hindrance from any weak shield of fleshly matter.

Having to depart very early in the morning, I had bidden farewell to "my cousin" over night. Yet it was not her cold, somewhat sulky adieu that oppressed me. Neither did I feel anger that the work of so many months had been forgotten, and that I was less to her now than the acquaintance of a few weeks; though many times had I somewhat merrily likened myself, in my own mind, to the unlucky little Jenny Wren, who had had the unexpected gift of a cuckoo's egg in her nest, and had consequently weary work to satisfy the wants of her great nestling. I tried to get up a little rightful anger, because my cuckoo had said to the little willing wren, "I beg you will make no noise in the morning, as you are to go so early: I have a difficulty in composing myself to sleep again, when once awakened." I thought I would have said something so different at part-

ing ; but to think of these as her last words, made me sad, not angry. And then I half knew why my heart was so heavy. I had not succeeded in my work. All those months had been thrown away ; " the Lady " was as little inclined to do right for righteousness' sake, as when I first knew her. While she was rather more uncomfortable to deal with, because her perceptions were brighter, and her capacities more alive.

Not even the thought that I was again, as it were, homeless, friendless, had to leave what I did love, duties which were pleasures, and hopes which were always leading me on, affected me so much, as the thought that I had failed in " my vengeance."

A Derbyshire morning of mist and damp did not assist me to be cheerful. An early departure is of all things the most trying to one's temper ; shivering and-doleful one's self, an aggrieved and injured air is also assumed by the servants, whose every look speaks the hardship of being torn from their much-required rest at such unearthly hours.

I would willingly have corded my trunks my-

self, and gone without breakfast, but still the coachman and horses were required to take me to the station, and a general disturbance was absolutely necessary, consistent, of course, with as little noise as possible.

I had bidden adieu to Phebe and my darling ere they went to sleep, and dared not trust myself to take even one last look. Sad and lonely I must go, as if I had no ties, no kin, no love in this house that I might claim as mine, and whose "God speed" would at least cheer me with a blessing, as I left the threshold.

"Breakfast is waiting, Miss Offley," yawned the poor housemaid.

I had a mind to say I would have none; but somebody had risen, and taken the trouble to prepare it for me,—the least I could do was to prove myself thankful, and partake of it.

"Very stupid, sad, unsatisfactory meals are early, lonely breakfasts."

This was said in thought on one side of the breakfast-room door; on the other I had to be sorry I had complained without reason.

Glynne was pouring out the tea. "Come, Nellie, be expeditious, and do not look so amazed

at seeing me doing woman's work. I made tea at Glynne Castle for a number of years, and consider myself an adept. I intend driving you to the station in my phaeton, not only because the black mares will do the distance in half the time that my lady's grey elephants take; but they want exercise, and you want excitement, I think, eh?"

"I am very sorry to go, Glynne."

"You must lay in a large store of that commodity. Lady Maria does not expect you; and it is more than probable, when she hears of your arrival, she will order you out of the house again."

"Oh, Glynne, where shall I go? What must I do?"

"You must remain, of course, and pay no attention to what she says."

"How is that possible?"

"Finish your breakfast, for I hear the rattle of wheels. I will read you a lecture as we go to the station, as much to the purpose, I flatter myself, as if I was Mr. Grant. Confound this infernal country! it's always raining here."

"Is that the text?"

“ Good child, do smile and be merry. I could have sworn some one had cut off your fairy’s wings when you first came down, and that you were in the doldrums from having always to stay on this miserable earth.”

In a few minutes, we were packed and off. The black mares were very fresh, and required all Glynne’s skill to manage for the first mile or so.

“ I am very sorry it is so early. If we had been upset the next minute, I must have taken off my hat to Mr. Grant, had he been looking out of one of his windows as we passed by.”

“ You are going to lecture me.”

“ Yes ! ha !—soho, Bessie ! Quiet, there ! I wish you were Mr. Grant now, I would take it out of you rarely.”

This was addressed to the mares, not me. We began to ascend a Derbyshire hill.

“ What do you think Mr. Grant would say, Nellie, if he had seen you and me driving by so cozily together ?”

“ I really would rather not venture even to think upon such a matter.”

“ And yet you call yourself a religious woman ?”

"I hope I may be so without being like Mr. Grant."

"Then you don't consider him religious?"

"Yes, I do, for he is conscientious, and thinks he does right."

"If you think a tender conscience is religion, there are some hopes for Selina and me."

"How? what can you mean?"

"Are you so careless in your judgment of character, not to have seen that Selina, without one single religious principle either inculcated or imbibed, has been twice brought to the brink of the grave through the tender scruples of some inward monitor?"

"Yes, yes, I know. I see what you mean; but lately, that is—the latter instance—her fear about me—for Richard told me."

"You need not stammer and stutter about it. I was as much to blame as you. Now hold hard; we are in a devil of a mess, I can tell you."

This again alluded to the mares, to whom he had not been paying sufficient attention.

For two miles we went like the wind.

"Now we are all right; they will be steady

enough before we reach the top of this hill ; and in ten minutes more, we shall be at the station. So I have hardly orthodox time for my lecture. Without alluding to any more Mr. Grants, or such kine, I wish to ask you, as you set up for being a religious woman, how you prove it ?”

“ By actions, deeds, in every way you can.”

“ Suppose your lot in life is agreeable, comfortable—suits you in every respect ?”

“ It is rarely so, Glynne. We must be tried.”

“ Then, as a religious woman, you ought to rejoice in troubles and difficulties.”

“ Yes, I ought.”

“ Why do you object, then, to go to my mother ?”

“ Did I do so ?”

“ Not in words, perhaps, but in every other way. Now, Nellie, this is my lecture :—If there is truth in that religion which you prize so much, prove it to me in your deeds towards my mother. Terrible as her conduct was before, it is nothing to what it is now. If God can pardon, if Christ can save another ‘Thief on the Cross,’ and if human love and tenderness are required as well, use all, and you make two converts. I conceive

you may be, if you choose it, a ministering angel on earth ere you reach the heaven for which you so often pine, and be none the less sorrowful at the delay if you do such work as this. As for that other business you had marked out for yourself, my dear child—there is a fable of a mouse wishing to ally herself to a lion—”

“And of a mouse who helped a lion out of a snare.”

“That is true. I will say no more. Especially as, if anything is to be done—ha, hem! I must remember Mr. Grant. Now, good-bye, Nellie; if you are a true and worthy Christian, none such ever had a fairer opportunity to prove it. And yet must the work be done unostentatiously, almost unknowingly. Extreme patience, unwearied care, unremitting watchfulness,—no word to alarm, no threat to scare. If I only was a good man now—Mr. Grant, for instance—what converts I might make.—Take care of her, Haines,” continued he to the guard; “for though she is very small, some people are possessed with an idea she is very precious.”

Fortunately, I do not think Haines or any one heard the latter part of this speech. What a

strange mixture of greatness and levity was in this man. As I thought this, I looked out of the window, for the train was moving. One last look, because he liked me, I am sure, and I was going to such a home, so forlorn.

The black mares were both pawing the air in mad rage; and the last thing I saw of them, the carriage, and Glynne, was a desperate, plunging effort to leap over the parapet at the embankment.

Somehow I felt sure Glynne would conquer them, and don't remember to have had any qualms all the journey up, as to an accident.

But I took the opportunity to fortify myself for what was to come.

I was not expected, yet must conduct myself as if no one was more welcome.

I might be ordered away, yet I was resolutely to stay.

I might be treated with contumely, threats, ill words. I was to consider them as pleasant, my due, just my right, and no more.

So I would, for the reward held out by Glynne.

All the journey I was treated with the greatest respect and kindness, handed on from Haines

to another guard, and from the other guard to still another, as if I had been really something very precious.

"My Lord of Glynne's cousin," did I hear Haines say ; and it was passed on.

Only when I heard it the third time did the idea (forgive me, Mr. Grant) come into my head, "My Lord of Glynne's cousin ! If they take such care of his cousin, what would they do for the Lady of Glynne ?" I felt a something strange rising in my throat, so I determined it should be a laugh. I laughed to think how fortunate it was for me I was my Lord of Glynne's "cousin." What advantages I derived from such relationship ! Such a prosperous journey, uneventful as far as cares or troubles went ! Just because I was his cousin, only his cousin.

CHAPTER XIII.

“The wretch, condemned with life to part,
Still, still on Hope relies ;
And every pang that rends the heart
Bids Expectation rise.

“Hope, like the glimmering taper’s light,
Adorns and cheers the way ;
And still, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.”—COWPER

I FOUND myself repeating these words, even at the very door of Lady Maria’s house at Brighton. The hour, eight o’clock in the evening, I suppose the thought flashed across me, that the magical words, “My Lord of Glynne’s cousin” would ensure me a welcome even here.

It seems they did. I was certainly expected, and shown, without apparent surprise, into the drawing-room.

A lady sat there. It could not be Lady Maria; for she ran eagerly towards me, her arms were round me, ere I had time to recognize Selina.

“My little Nellie, how startled you are! Don’t weep so! Did not Glynne tell you I should be here? Do you not know that we have got our living, and it is within five miles of Brighton? Such a lovely, healthful spot! And it is for that reason Glynne made all these arrangements for poor mamma. I was to be near, yet not too near. Together, dear Nell, we have such a sad task, yet will it be an holy duty, I trust, to prepare her. For her fate is inevitable. And, though her sufferings are intense, she is the same in disposition. She believes not in danger; she credits nothing that the doctor tells her. We have not dared to tell her that we have been informed of the nature of her disease. Ah! Nellie, it is the most calamitous and terrible to which human nature is subject. There now, you look better. I see by your eyes, so good to look into, my Nell, when the sudden flash of a high and steady purpose comes into them, that you accept the work. To you we

trust, to begin and go on; for Richard, Glynne, and I have but one thought in the matter; and we leave her to you, in full confidence. We are not sure about Hind: we think she neglects my mother; yet her reserve and haughtiness prevents our being able to interfere, as we should do. So now I will bid you good night, love. It was so like Glynne, giving you horrible anticipations, and no prospect of pleasure. It is the way in which he always treats himself. There is no one like him, after all, that ever I saw, Nellie. Did you?"

"No: there is no one like him," I answered calmly.

"I wish," began Selina, "I wish—no, luckily, I have no time to wish any more, for I hear Richard driving up our little carriage. For only think, Nellie, we keep our carriage now. Glynne gave it to us, and the great stout horse, suited for parson's work, steady and untirable. It is a wonder to me, how he seems to know what is best for everybody."

"So do you, Selina, comforting me, as you have done."

"Do you hear Richard's step? He knows

you are come, by your boxes. I wonder which he loves best, you or me?"

"He loves Nellie best," answered Richard, entering the room. "Love is too weak a word to express what he feels for his wife." So, while he gave Nellie a brother's salute, he clasped a little hand close, with the air of one who says to his heart, "It is all the world to me."

So they bade me farewell, promising to come the next day, and I ran down those stairs again, as if I was a new Nellie, renovated and refreshed; for, twilight as it was, I must see the carriage, their first vehicle, and the stout parsonic horse.

Then they drove away, and I ran up again, as if I had wings, hardly able to conceive that the evening and the morning should be so unlike.

With Selina and Richard as coadjutors, what might not be done for poor Lady Maria? Glynne was right not to tell me they were there; for I took the sudden pleasure as an omen of good fortune, and earnestly knelt to God for grace to perform my duty in this house.

It might be three days after my arrival before I saw Lady Maria. She had not been told that I was in the house; as Hind felt assured she

would exert herself to see me, if only to intimate that I must leave again immediately.

My bed-room was over hers. I had chosen it at Selina's request. On that third night I was awaked by groans, terrible, heart-breaking to hear. I put on my dressing-gown quickly, and ran down stairs. No one was in the dressing-room, though I had been told Hind slept there. I went with a beating heart into Lady Maria's room, from whence the sounds proceeded more painful than ever. No servant was there. I approached the bed. Lying on it was a sad and fearful spectacle. With the clothes thrown partially aside, her cap off, and her hair all torn and dishevelled, lay a wreck of Lady Maria. But more appalling still was a bare arm, from which the night-dress had been rent in passionate pain, and running up and over it, extending beyond the arm and down the side, was a frightful sore, from which red and purple veins seemed to be starting. I looked in her face. She appeared insensible. The groans had given place to unconscious moaning.

I examined the numerous bottles on the table, and seeing fine rags lying by one, marked "the

lotion," I poured it out into a small basin, and laid the steeped rags upon that terrible arm. As they threw up a steam from the fever and heat, I removed them, placing fresh ones.

Thus unceasingly I applied the lotion for an hour. The moans had ceased.

"Thank God !" came from the now conscious lips of the poor sufferer. "Remember, Hind, you do it in the same manner again. I have not been so easy for months." And she fell into an exhausted sleep.

Hind did not come home for another hour, and found me still watching.

She looked at me defiant, then entreatingly. I followed her into the dressing-room, when she stammered forth, "I am hard-worked, I have no pleasure."

"Say nothing," I answered, "but do your duty in the day-time. I will watch at night."

Selina was pleased at being told by the doctor, at the end of a few days, that though nothing could stop the terrible disease, the nervous system of the patient was much less irritable.

"She evidently obtains refreshing sleep now," said he, "her maid is attentive, and fulfils all my

wishes. You should reward her, as it is only through incessant watchfulness on her part, that this rest is obtained."

Meantime I had a letter from "the Lady." Being characteristic, it shall be transcribed in full.

"MY DEAR URIEL,

"You will be glad to hear that we leave this place to-morrow for London. I have been too long in the country. I told my Lord I was surprised that he had allowed me to remain so long. He put me in mind that it was at my own request, which it certainly was, now I recollect. But then I thought, of course, you would be with me. When I told this to my Lord, he agreed with me it made all the difference. In fact I have been very ill ever since you left. And little Harry has been extremely naughty; he cried so much one day, that though the exertion was great, I took a little switch and whipped him myself. I thought it my duty to do it. My Lord was very angry, and treated me to one of his scenes, which I always tell him are disgraceful in a peer. Mrs. Grant was very kind, and lent me the switch; we had not one;

you know; but I discovered that Harry was crying that day so much, because you were gone. Dear little fellow, he has a most affectionate heart, just like mine. I sent for him immediately I knew, frankly told him he was a good little boy, and gave him some sugar-plums. Of course he missed you, as we all do; and this letter is to request, dear Uriel, that you will return as soon as possible. I shall hope to find you in town on our arrival. My Lord is very kind, and plays piquet every evening with me. But he objects to throwing up his hand, when he has been dealt a good one. He says, 'Allow me to play it out, and you shall mark the score,' which does nearly as well, though not quite, as I don't like playing a bad hand. Mr. Grant is a very ridiculous person—he said my coachman must be dismissed—he never went to church. Though I think Mrs. Grant is worse, and by no means well-bred. She told me I ought not to spend so much time at 'piquet,' that I could make a petticoat for a poor woman in that time. Conceive, a petticoat for a poor woman! What is the meaning of the woman being poor, if she cannot make her own petticoat? Pinmaurice

makes all mine. I told her she spoke very foolishly, and did not know what ladies in my position ought to do. And she said 'they were only dust and ashes, like any other mortal.' Did you ever hear of such ill-breeding? They altered very much after you left, and became very presuming.

"I advised my Lord never to speak to either of them again, but he said he could not take the trouble of remembering he was not to speak to them. I don't think I shall. I don't think I ought—after taking away my Lord's character, as they did about you. I ought to show I am justly indignant.—So now good bye, dearest Uriel. It is pleasant to be able to write to you, freely and fully. Perhaps you did not know I was always celebrated for writing letters. It is not at all fatiguing either, because you can lay back, and have your sloping writing table, and everything convenient. Pray, remember I expect to find you in Grosvenor Square. In fact, as Pinmaurice and my Lord will tell you, I have been miserable without you; and if you love me, you will not fail to be there.

"Your truly affectionate

"ELIZA HARRINGTON GLYNNE."

CHAPTER XIV.

"So beautiful, so full of life they seem'd,
So made entire of beams of angels' eyes.
Gay, guileless, sportive, lovely little things!
Playing around the den of sorrow, clad
In smiles, believing in their fairy hopes,
And thinking man and woman true."

POLLOCK.

"THE Lady" must have wished for me, as she took the trouble of coming down to Brighton for the express purpose of taking me back again—and brought my darling with her.

"Oh! Nellie, Nellie," said he, clasping me close, "boy had fat heads all day."

It was necessary to leave that house for a few days. I had gone too suddenly into all the hor-

rors of the sick room ; a total loss of appetite, and a succession of fainting fits every morning, proved, " when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak."

I had not yet told Selina of my nightly task, neither could I guess if Lady Maria had ever recognised me. If she had, no sign on her part acknowledged it. But her doctor had discovered it, from being called in, to recover me from a sudden swoon of deadly sickness. And he it was who advised me to absent myself for a short time, just to breathe other air as a medicine. Meantime a proper nurse should attend in my place. During my short absence, he gave me some direction to follow, which would inure me better to this painful duty.

So I returned to town with my boy and " the Lady." The breath of the fresh air in her company, made that company very pleasant. How brave is the spirit to do what it knows not ; how weak to perform what is disagreeable.

However, I was to keep up my spirits—not lower them. So we had a merry journey to town ; " the Lady" declared she had not felt so well for a month past. And my boy was happy

submitting to a wonderful lot of whims from his mother the whole journey up, without a murmur.

When Glynne saw me at dinner, he said, "Brighton seems not to agree with you."

"That is what I tell her," said "the Lady;" "only think I found her lying on a sofa. I knew she would be sadly anxious and vexed about me."

I did not answer either of them; but while I was playing at the piano, Glynne came up to me, and said, "do you intend going back to Brighton?"

"I must return," I answered.

"Nellie, do you ever look in the glass?" he asked, after a pause,—

"Yes, several times a day."

"Can you not perceive the change a fortnight has made in you? you are very transparent and shadowy."

"I was foolish, and did too much; it won't happen again." There was a pause of some minutes.

"Can you go to-morrow night with Neville, to a children's ball, at S— House? Miss Harrington and I are engaged out to dinner! I will come for you both, after it is over."

I agreed.

When I played at "piquet" with "the Lady," Glynne watched us, "in order," as he said, "to take a lesson in the proper mode of playing with Miss Harrington."

"Nothing can be more easy," said she.

"So I see," said he drily.

Little Neville did not look forward to the children's party with half so much pleasure as I did. He disliked his best frock. It was made of magnificent velvet tartan, with buttons most attractive to childish eyes. Mrs. Pinmaurice was shocked at his taste; "had it not once formed part of his dear mamma's court-train!"

"'Tis a fat frock," said Neville, throwing it down; which objection was inexplicable to Mrs. Pinmaurice, but rather too glaring to Phebe and me.

It was a beautiful scene. The magnificent hall, in one place gorgeous with flowers, in another cool and green with shrubs—the tall fluted columns and fine white groups of statuary, rising up as specimens of man's powers, intermingled with nature's loveliest productions—filled the mind with admiration and delight. But when the little fairy children wandered in

and out, amid the great works of art and the beautiful productions of nature, the hand of the Great Master Workman was beheld, inimitable. The cold statues looked colder and more lifeless, the flowers of earth drooped, as in deference to the lovelier flowers of God.

Not even the remembrance of that sad sick room could mar my enjoyment of this sight. I looked at, and loved it, as one does that at which one may never look again. And my boy was so admired.

"Nellie," said a voice close to me, "you are enjoying this like a child yourself."

"Yes, Glynne; I never saw any scene to equal it before. It is so good, as well as beautiful, to view it."

"I did not know how you and Neville would get on among strangers, so when the ladies left the dinner-table, I left too, and walked here."

"Thank you, Glynne, we have done very well as yet, except that I wish to know the names of a great many people. You see how much our boy is admired?"

There was a moment's pause. His voice was strange when he answered,

"He seems to have fraternized with another fellow of his own age."

"Yes; that is the most wonderful child in the whole room. He is scarcely older than our boy, but see how independent he is; I don't think he has even a nurse with him. No one appears to be in charge of him."

"Neville, bring your friend here," said his father.

As the two little fellows came gravely and sedately towards Glynne, both he and I could not avoid remarking their beautiful contrast. The little stranger was larger and taller than Neville, with shoulders and arms of Saxon fairness and beauty, which his brown velvet frock showed off in artistic taste. A profusion of thick fair curls clustered over his head, and hung down even to the frock; while dark eyes of peculiar size and brilliancy made his hair and skin seem still more fair.

"What is your name?" said Glynne, as with the frank grace of childhood the boy put his hand into his.

"Erle," he answered, turning and putting up his face for me to kiss.

"Where is your nurse?" said I. "Who takes care of you?"

The boy looked up in my face, and laughed. Then pointing to the sofa, he said, "My nursie is there."

We saw no one. He clapped his hands laughingly, and called out "Bear! Bear!"

From beneath the sofa, at that childish word came forth a huge hound. As he approached with solemn and majestic step to his little charge, the other children fled in fear.

The great dog stood by the little master, his intelligent eyes saying, "What do you wish?"

The little master kissed him between the eyes, and said, "Bear is always Erle's nurse."

"Oh! Glynne," I exclaimed, "what a beautiful group! How I should like to model them."

"Now that I see the dog," answered Glynne, "I know who my little friend is, and can introduce you to his father and mother."

At that moment the hound gave a deep short bark. And yet one could hardly call so melodious a note by that name. It was palpably expressive of pleasure.

"Mamma has come," said the fair-haired boy, his eyes flashing with a sudden joy, and little dimples showing themselves all over his face, neck, and arms, in his excitement.

Glynne went forward to greet a lady, a little lady, less than myself. To her boy she had transmitted her wonderful eyes. There was a grace and prettiness in her air and words, that might properly be termed bewitching. There was also an originality and quaintness in her dress, her appearance, her speech, that reminded me of a lovely picture, painted by a master-hand to show the reality of some poet's dream of beauty.

She came towards me with frank courtesy.

"Miss Offley! of course. I should like to know Miss Offley. Do I not know her already? Have I not talked to her, by the hour, when speaking to her statue of 'The Penitent Child?'"

There was a charm in her clear voice—it entered your heart; a power in her brilliant eyes—they looked into your soul. I liked to be so searched.

"This group is so beautiful," I said.

"Ah! will you model them for me? And not only will you gratify me, but a tribe of kinsmen,

whose gratitude will be boundless? Nay, I am rash to propose such a thing, for Beauvillian feelings are sometimes too vehement to be agreeable. But we will conceal your real name, and they shall canonize you in their large hearts as the angel of Sculpture."

"I have been so long without practice—I have not modelled anything for some time."

"Nay, but the genius is there; it will soon awaken from its enforced slumber, if you give it permission. My Lord of Glynne, you who have proved yourself capable of any deed, from that of exalted heroism down to easy good nature, arrange this matter for me."

"I introduced you for no other purpose."

"Shall I quarrel with you for not putting my wish to know Miss Offley on a less selfish motive? I think not, for you are dangerous to deal with in an argument. Have you discovered that yet, Miss Offley? Does he lord it over you, as he does over all of us, by his unanswerable arguments of truth and right?"

"We have never quarrelled yet."

"Ah, that is because you are always right, I presume."

"Not always. We have quarrelled," said Glynne drily, looking down upon me as one might suppose the Egyptian sphinx would regard a midge about to settle on his cheek.

"Neville is tired, I think," I remarked.

"The children want supper," said the little quaint lady. "Pleasure, like other more common-place matters, must be fed."

"Nellie, you had better sit down, and rest, while I take the boy with yours, Lady Erlscourt."

"Let me introduce her to some one just with whom she can chat, while we are away. Ah! there is Margaret. Here, Queen Meg, you are to take great care of Miss Offley while we are absent, discussing creature comforts; and we will take your children with us. Bear, go away, and hide your awful self from all eyes, until I call you."

So they departed, Glynne carrying his boy, and the great hound disappearing.

My new acquaintance, from her appearance, deserved the fair name of queen. She was lovely and stately—a mixture of quiet dignity with graceful beauty. She made room for me by her side, with a smile on her lips; but her

eyes appeared to be gazing far off, into an unseen world, and were incapable of expressing pleasure.

She said she was glad to make my acquaintance. Her voice was low, as if some chord in it was broken. Yet as she continued to speak, the quiet intelligence of her words and eyes showed there was nothing morbid in her sadness. Her heart was either away, or the sun of it was set. I had scarcely had time to answer her, when a gentleman, handsome and aristocratic-looking to a remarkable degree, even amid that company of England's noblest, with curls almost feminine in their fairness, length, and beauty, came eagerly towards her.

"Margaret, where is my Lotty?"

"She is in the supper-room with the children and my Lord of Glynne."

"Hah!" he answered, a beaming light illumining his whole face, "the only man of whom I am jealous."

The soft smile came to the lips once more. It seemed to me, whatever woe had taken the light from the eyes, the gentle heart was yet too full of love to withhold a warm sympathy, whe-

ther of joy or not, with those around her. He appreciated the smile, departing with the joyous laugh of unmistakeable happiness.

"He is quite as fond of the Lord of Glynne as his wife, Miss Offley. Indeed, who can know him without according him that admiration which we generally bestow on some fine historical character. He seems to have nothing about him of those small human sins that mar great and noble deeds."

"I have lived so little with him of late years."

"That may be, but still you must hear him spoken of. The philanthropy and labour he has bestowed on his Irish estate would serve to render him a remarkable man, even if his heroism and courage in India had not done so before."

I murmured some reply; I felt confused—bewildered.

"You must be very proud of him as your kinsman," my companion continued. "I can conceive no gratification so great as to watch the deference and honour paid to the Lord of Glynne by all classes. We met him at dinner

to-day ; and I could not help wishing I was his mother. You smile. I am older than I seem, and begin to feel that there is no joy like the joy of a mother who has given birth to a noble son."

I did not wish her to stop ; I wanted to hear more about Glynne, that Glynne unnaturally cast off by his mother, unknown to, unappreciated by, his wife ; that Glynne vilified and slandered by a Mr. Grant, scouted and hated by a silly girl—no, not hated.

If the fair, sad lady by my side knew as much as I did, what would she think then ? I felt sure the heroism of private life would hold in her estimation its proper place, leaving to the multitude that applause which brings its own reward to public deeds.

"And yet I have heard it whispered he owns no God," she murmured low to me.

"I cannot think it !" I answered, hastily.

"I am glad, joyful to hear you say so, for such men are meant to be shining beacons in the world, for the guidance of lesser spirits. See, they are returning. Bear defines the approach of his mistress."

And the deep-set eyes and drooping ears of the great hound appeared from beneath the curtain.

I looked in the direction of his eyes. In the doorway was the little lovely, quaint lady, and bending over her, so that his fair curls fell on her dark hair, was the gentleman who had last spoken to us. He had his child on his shoulder ; and the little fellow steadied himself on his seat by clutching the thick curls so like his own.

Some animated and happy secret was passing between the husband and wife, for floods of love and delight flashed from his eyes, while she looked up but once, answering him. What a beauty there is in holy conjugal love.

As I turned from the sight, my eyes fell upon another picture. With the scowl of ancient days upon him. Glynne was also gazing on this pair ; even in that instant, he too turned and caught my glance. I thought I had seen anger, jealousy, nay, despair, in that scowl, but it was gone. He came straight towards me with his usual calm, imperturbable countenance ; and showing me Neville asleep in his arms, said—

“ My boy is tired, he must go home.”

He laid a stress upon the word “ my,” and his voice sounded as if it came out of a vinegar-cruet.

CHAPTER XV.

“What shall we do? Why, all.
How many things, sir, do men live to do?
The mighty labour is to die.”—BEDDOES.

I BID my new friends a hasty good-night, and departed. Glynne laid the boy on my knee in the carriage. I thought he was coming in, but he did not, he walked away with a quick step. Nevertheless, he was at home before us, ready to carry Neville to bed.

The next morning, “the Lady” was very cross. She descanted for an hour on the rudeness and dulness of the people you meet at a London dinner-party.

“One, a young girl, with extraordinary fine diamonds (so misplaced), did not even know I was the greatest lady there.”

"Was she blind?" observed Glynne.

"And there was an old woman who absolutely claimed connexionship with me; and when I told her in my way (you know how dignified I can be, my Lord) that it was quite impossible, she said, with the utmost effrontery, 'Ah, my Lady, I do not wonder, in your situation, that you sometimes forget people in mine; as I often say to myself, if I was in her situation, I should not be able to do as I do in my situation.'"

"Aunt Scann!" exclaimed Glynne and I together.

"Oh, then, you do know her; but what can she mean by my situation? I am in no situation."

"The Lady" evidently thought that word referred to something in particular. I did not know how to answer, and I suppose Glynne would not.

Luckily, there was some little disturbance down stairs, as if an arrival.

In a few minutes Richard Graham appeared.

"I have come for you, Nellie," he said. "Poor Lady Maria has had no rest since you left. She calls for you so incessantly, we could resist her cries no longer."

"You are not obliged to go," said Glynne, coldly to me. But he knew I should do so.

"What on earth is to become of me?" said 'the Lady.'

I ran up-stairs, and was coming down again already prepared to return with Richard, when a hand stayed me on the stairs.

"I shall send Neville down to-morrow. You will promise to take him out once a day, yourself," said Glynne.

"I promise," I answered.

"Your life is precious to him, if to no one else."

"It is very pleasant, Glynne, to think so; I will take every care of myself."

"I had somewhat forgotten your nature, otherwise I should have imposed this heavy task on stronger shoulders," he continued.

"There is nothing to fear, with moderate care," I replied.

"The Lady" was very angry, and would not wish me good-bye.

On the journey down, Richard told me, the day after I left, Lady Maria had been very ill; the nurse said she had a bad night. Selina

found the whole house in terrible confusion, from her violence, and almost madness. The doctor had been for two hours endeavouring to calm her.

"She incessantly calls for Uriel," said the nurse.

"And why were you not as tender of her as that Uriel?" growled the doctor.

"I did my very best," said the nurse.

"Thus, Nellie," said Richard, "Lina discovered what good work you had been doing; and now that the ice is broken, and worn down by disease and pain, Lady Maria cannot withhold her confidence and trust in you both, we are happier. We thank you, Nellie, and trust to you to give us every opportunity of doing our duty."

I knew what he meant, and promised my best.

"Last night was even worse than the first," continued Richard. "I left her stupified with laudanum. You will arrive just as she will require your help. It seems, Nellie, there is some healing balm in the touch of your fingers."

"Oh, Richard, she requires the tenderness of touch that could not displace the down on a butterfly's wing." And I shuddered.

"Now that there is no secret about the matter, things can be much mended, Nellie. Take my advice, instal yourself head-nurse, and bear no infringement of your orders. The poor lady's state will be much mended; she has been so long in the clumsy hands of a servant."

Selina was looking out for us. She only kissed me, took off my bonnet and cloak; those dreadful groans were audible.

I ran in to Lady Maria. The doctor was there; basin and cloths all ready.

"Here she is, here is, Uriel," said he.

As I laid on the moistened rags with my lightest touch, he said, "I would not suffer Mrs. Graham to come in. Mind, she must never see that."

"She never shall," I answered.

"Beautiful! you do it beautifully; those little fingers have no more weight in them than the touch of a cloud. Smell this, and go into the next room for a minute."

I performed my sad task for an hour; going

every ten minutes into the other room to the open window. I found this was a certain preventive of the deadly sickness.

"Thank God!" said the poor patient at last.

"Thank God!" answered the doctor; "now you will be pretty free from pain for the next twelve hours. So suppose you rise, have your bed made, and eat something. Here is this Uriel going to make your room nice and pleasant for you."

While Hind and the nurse dressed and tended Lady Maria, Selina and I went to a market-gardener's and bought various fresh, sweet-smelling plants; also two small beds with spring mattresses, and capable of being raised and let down, with various other little things, all Selina's idea and forethought.

When we returned, we found Lady Maria in the dressing-room, eating chicken with relish. She shrunk, as if struck with sudden pain, as we both entered, without warning.

But it was necessary we should do so, and act without reference to her, otherwise our plans could never be carried out.

Selina brought her a pretty Heliotrope to smell and admire, and then went into the bedroom, to get it altered after her own fashion. The great four-post bed was taken away, the two small ones placed there instead, with a curtain across that side of the room. Venetian blinds were put to both windows, so that they could be always open. The carpet was taken away, and fine matting laid in its place. All the necessary apparatus for the sick chamber had its recess and curtain. Selina's last arrangement was to fill the windows with plants.

Sweet, fresh, and comfortable was that terrible room.

The doctor gave her much praise.

"You have done all you can. Suffer she must, and still more than she does now.—But," turning to me, "perseverance will bring her ease. And if you obey my instructions, being also careful never to stay above ten minutes in the room, then, 'Lady Uriel,' you will have strength to do your duty."

The doctor, like all clever people, took fancies; he fancied my name, and, I think, me. He said, "I like coming to this house now, it was

penance before. I hope some one is thinking of this poor woman's soul."

Did we not? — We cried to God in our distress.

Then was it divine to see, the earnest care of a faithful minister of God for the saving of a soul, deeply died with the leprosy of sin.

At first Richard only took his place as a kind son-in-law, who had pleasure in assisting to amuse the long hours of wearied confinement.

He would bring a new book, merry and clever (and such are to be had, even now, in these sad days of trash—vide "Critic"), and read bits aloud; he would buy flowers, and offer them, with pretty little speeches, not hypocritical, sentimental, or insincere; but something that joined Selina with flowers, with love, with all that was in his heart, and yet associated her mother too.

He would hold discussions with us, in which his enlarged views of piety and Christian charity enlarged my heart to almost the level of his own, and could scarcely fail to sow seed wherever they fell.

Could such seeds find any soil in a heart so

utterly choked with ashes and dust? It was not for us to judge. We could but wait, and "hope in the Lord."

If we ventured to murmur to Richard at beholding so little, nay, no return for all his prayers, his patience, his forbearance, he would rebuke us:—

"Why, Nellie, you get no more for your earthly task—scarcely thanks. I must pray yet more. The rescue of a soul, so long in the hands of the 'Evil One,' is no slight work. Else would not our Saviour have died for it."

Neville came down to me, living in a different part of the house to his grandmother. When sufficiently well to bear it, he went with me to see her. He took a fancy to her, though I am partly persuaded in his childish heart there was the spirit of opposition in this. Poor Lady Maria was wasted to a shadow—smaller than myself. Yet his little heart was so tender, it might be in pity for her sad looks.

She would talk to the child, when she would not speak to me or Selina, for her moods were very wayward.

"Why do you suffer the child to call you

Nellie? it is very familiar and inappropriate," she said, one day.

"She is my Nellie," said Neville, who was beginning to speak like a gentleman.

"Absurd!" said Lady Maria, peevishly.

"Besurd you, grandmamma," with all his father's haughtiness.

"He is just like his father," she moaned.

"Neville, go up to Phebe. I could not have supposed you would forget to treat one so ill kindly."

"Grandmamma, I am sorry. God gave boy his Nellie."

"Who teaches the child to be a methodist?" said Lady Maria, as he left the room.

"I do."

"For what reason?"

"He may have to suffer as you do, and will want God's help to bear it."

In the evening, Richard remarked that, a criminal, condemned for murder, had confessed his crime, and become a penitent ere he died.

"I have no belief in such penitence," said Lady Maria.

"Thank God! I have," answered Mr. Graham.

"Do you imagine they are sincere."

"If they are not sincere when Death stares them in the face, they never will be, Lady Maria."

"I think it wrong to believe in death-bed repentance."

"It is not my duty to judge if the repentance is sincere or otherwise. It is my duty to promise pardon in case it is."

"I have heard there are sins unpardonable," said Lady Maria, in an agitated voice.

"Yes," said Richard, with earnest indignation, "that sin is unpardonable that doubts the Saviour's power to save:—'Though your sins be as scarlet, yet shall they be white as wool.'"

"There are some sins unpardonable, I tell you," she exclaimed, with vehemence.

"God forgive you the doubt!" he answered, devoutly.

"Murder I know is forgiven, but there are worse sins than murder——" she paused.

"Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turn.

unto me, saith the Lord, and I will abundantly pardon." The solemnity of his voice caused Selina to bend her head, and clasp her hands in prayer. I saw Lady Maria look at the beautiful, earnest attitude. By the flush that came to her face, the conviction rushed into her heart, "She whom I have most injured, prays for me."

CHAPTER XVI.

“I have nought to fear.
This darkness is the shadow of thy wing.
Beneath it I am almost sacred. Here
Can come no evil thing.”—ANON.

SOME nights after this conversation, Lady Maria had an attack of suffering worse than I had ever seen her endure.

She called upon me in moving, frantic terms to ease her; and though I was doing my utmost, at first it seemed useless.

“Where is that God, to whom you said Neville should pray, if he endured sufferings like mine?”

“‘Behold, before they call, I will answer. And while they are yet speaking, I will hear.’ This hath God promised.”

“O God! hear me!” said the poor creature

trying to clasp her hands: "hear the lowest, vilest sinner. O God! spare me! This torture is more than I can endure!"

It may be that the applications were taking effect:—it might be that, in the earnestness of her prayer—in the solemn awe that must have entered her heart, as she, for the first time in her life, addressed the Being she had outraged by every act of her life, a reaction of the nerves took place. The spirit triumphed over the flesh. Or it might be—and who dare question it?—God heard the prayer. But she was instantly relieved. A little bubbling sound prepared me for the bursting of one of the diseased veins.

It was to flow a certain time, and then be stopped by a process I could not perform. So I sent for the doctor.

"Now," said he, "she will be easier for the next fortnight, but only to endure the same again."

I wondered if she heard him, or slept her usual exhausted sleep.

Before that fortnight was out, we had a letter from my guardian. Alas! he was wounded, and that seriously—so much so as to be sent

home in a precarious state. Even now he might be landing at Southampton. When Lady Maria read the letter, all the old evil of her nature broke out afresh.

In the first place, she desired him to be told he could not come to her—she was ill. We easily perceived that she could not bear him to see her in her present state. And we looked at each other in trouble, thinking on whom it must fall to tell her, she could in that case never see him again.

Secondly, she fidgetted and became unhappy about Selina. “You must go home, my dear; you must not stay here,” she said with unwonted kindness.

Poor, foolish, weak woman—wicked too! How sad we looked!

Lastly, she remembered me. “It will be as well for you to take little Neville back to Grosvenor Square. If Captain Forest is ill, he must not be bored with the noise of a child. Hind can do all I require now, thank you.”

“Lady Maria,” said Richard kindly, “the good God, who gives so much more than either we desire or deserve, will take care that in this

meeting, now about to take place between you and your long-estranged husband, neither my wife nor my little sister (such is Nellie to me) will do aught but what is for your good."

"I do not know—I cannot tell," she said hurriedly. "I am ill—I cannot be to him what I was."

"We pity you much for being a prey to feelings so sinful and unchristian; yet we thank God we have it in our power to relieve your mind. Look at my Selina. Read in those pure eyes a love of God, that makes her, as a breath of wind comes and goes, hear evil and forget it. So do I look and read, and, next to God, see my own name exalted to the husband's sacred pedestal. Do you, like me, thank God we have that faith in her which makes love so perfect. You have but one wish, as I have, that I could prove my trust. God bless my spotless wife!"

There was something so true, so honest, in all that Mr. Graham said, that the more simple the words, the greater force they had.

"Captain Forest must come here, home, to his wife," continued he; "his state may require nursing and care; under your superintendence,

if well enough, his daughter Selina, and ward Nellie, will do all that feminine care can for him. As for myself, I shall go by the next train to Southampton, wait the arrival of his ship, and, if it comes before Saturday, bring him here."

There was no gainsaying that good and cheerful voice. We knew, and she knew, that when Mr. Graham spoke in that tone, he assumed a certain command.

After he had left by the train, I busied myself in preparing another sick-room: But Selina went to Hind, and bid her search her Lady's wardrobe for, or procure for her, some pretty wrapping dresses, trimmed with delicate lace and soft-coloured ribbons, with caps to match.

When we met again, she told me what she had done. So, on returning to the drawing-room, I remarked to Selina aloud,

"Then, if your mother only looks as well as she does to-night, my guardian will see very little difference. Blue suits her best, and you must arrange these soft curls, Selina, to make them look their prettiest."

Lady Maria looked at us with trembling eagerness. To be sure, when people do allow

foolish and mean thoughts to occupy their minds, how low they fall ! I am certain the poor thing thought more highly of us at that moment than if we were the greatest heroines on record. It would have cost her more effort to say such a simple speech, and perform such a proper act, than it would have cost me to try and be Joan of Arc. And she is that heroine on record, whom I have always fancied I never could be. Like Aunt Scann, I had been rather fond of placing myself in the situations of various historical characters, and generally coming out of them highly the better, as I thought.

That night I was unwearied in my endeavours to procure for Lady Maria a good night's rest ; for on that depended much of her repose the next day ; and, while I wondered at the insane vanity, which made her assist me as much as she could, by showing no impatience, the clue to many of her sins was before me. My heart was beating with pleasure at the thoughts of seeing my dear guardian again ; while an anxious throb of pain would be felt, lest his wound should be dangerous. Yet here was his wife, from whom he had been separated a year and a half,

who ought to have been anxious about his health, fearful of the consequences of the journey, desirous that all nourishing and good things should be ready, solely occupied in dressing herself up for the meeting, so as to hide her mortal sickness from his eyes, or any change in her appearance; and was incessantly asking us how she looked, instead of the more natural and important question of, When might he arrive?

A telegraphic message from Richard gave us the intelligence that he had already landed, and they would be with us about five. As Selina read it aloud, on my lips dwelt the question, "Is he very ill?" while Lady Maria said, "Draw down the blinds: he must not see me in the full glare of day."

We persuaded her to sleep if she could; but she said, she should probably disarrange her cap!

So, getting more excited every hour, and more tired, we dragged on the time until five. We heard the wheels of a carriage: he was coming. She sat up, though it must have been dreadful pain. She even said, "I must rise—I must go a few steps to meet him—I would not have him see me quite an invalid." She made the effort,

as we heard him coming up the stairs. The door opened. Richard led into the room a poor, shattered frame. Two feeble, thin hands were stretched out, groping his way. A bandage was over his eyes. My guardian was blind.

CHAPTER XVII.

"There is no God," the foolish saith;—

But none, "there is no sorrow."

And nature oft the cry of faith

In bitter need will borrow :

Eyes which the preacher could not school

By wayside graves are raised ;

And lips say, "God be pitiful,"

Which ne'er said "God be praised."

Be pitiful, oh ! God !

E. B. BROWNING.

SHE was a very strange woman, this weak and wayward Lady Maria. The loss of his manly beauty, the helpless sad state he was in, his sufferings, his hoverings between life and death, awoke no sympathy in her. He was not the handsome Captain Forest, to obtain whom she had sacrificed so much. He was a miserable

shattered wreck. Hopes were held out that some of these days he might see a little with one eye. The hopes were small, which she said "was fortunate, a man with one eye being more unsightly than not seeing at all!" She had no fears now in leaving him to our care. We repaid as best we could all his kindness to us in former years.

It may be that Selina looked prettier in her husband's eyes attending that poor blind man, than at any other time.

We did not know, we could not tell, if she was not revenging herself after a noble fashion.

Captain Forest's mother was now very old, and could not come to see him; neither could he go to her, at least at present.

Lady Maria's sufferings were drawing to a close. We had been told to expect them to be worse. They were dreadful. When a prey to them, she poured out her whole soul in prayers and penitence; letting out in her cries and agonies, many confessions that gave me other clues to the events of her sinful life. But as none heard them, save myself and the nurse, I could only think I had no right to divulge them—Selina

was happy ; to take up her antecedents, if only to learn that Captain Forest had been as much wronged as herself, would have been no avail now. Glynne would be restored to his rights but too soon.

Very sad were we to see this life ebbing so fast, with so little to comfort us as to future hope.

Richard spent all the time he could spare from his parish with us.

Little Neville was sent home—Glynne was written for ; yet still no real remorse smote that heart ; no prayer for mercy rose to those lips, except when extorted by agony.

Glynne never appeared to such advantage, I thought, as when, with the tenderness of a woman, he waited on and cared for my guardian.

One night, our saddest, weariest, when I and my poor patient cried together, "would God it were morning," a powerful arm lifted me from the bed on which I knelt, bathing that fearful arm.

"Let me do it," said Glynne.

He must have been very tender, she did not shrink, and her moans grew fainter.

"Mother," he said at last, "do you know what a sinner you are before God and man?"

"Forgive me, Glynne, I know I have wronged you."

"I forgave you long ago, on my father's death-bed. But you have the forgiveness of God to implore."

"Yes, some day soon I will."

"It must be now, or not at all. Our Saviour forgave the 'penitent thief' on the Cross. You are as near death as he was."

"God forbid! oh! God forbid, Glynne! you mistake, this fit will go off!"

"It may, but that does not lessen the fact you must make your peace with God! for neither you or I can now say to each other, 'there is no God!' Mother, from the earliest remembrance of my childhood, I never recollect your granting me a single request but one, and that was for a bad purpose. Grant me one now, to take away from us both the sin we committed against the young girl committed to our trust.

"I did not mean her any harm," murmured Lady Maria.

"Will you grant me this favour, mother? say.

You shrink from Richard Graham, as from one whose nature is utterly at variance with yours. Will you regard your son, who has been as Godless as yourself?"

"Yes," she muttered, as in fear.

"Call Richard Graham," he said.

Richard came.

"Pray read to my mother the prayers for the dying." It was done with a solemnity that made us kneel and weep in fear.

"Now, read the prayers for the dead."

As he came to those words, "we therefore commit her body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

"Stay," said Glynne. "Mother, are we to be able to say this of you; or must your children go home from your grave, knowing that these words are a mockery, and you are damned?"

"Save me, my God! my God!"

"We want no confession, but to God! your children desire to think well of you; your husband the same. It is your soul they care for, Mother, mother, cancel the debt we have against

you ; repay us ten-thousand fold for all we may have suffered, by a sincere prayer to God for pardon!"

"What must I say?" and the weak hands joined themselves feebly together.

"From your heart it must be."

"From my heart I desire it to be."

"Then, Richard Graham, prepare—my last request to my mother is, that she partakes of the Holy Sacrament of Christ's Supper with her husband, in token that they part in peace—with her children, in proof of love and forgiveness,—in the presence of the all-seeing God, as a mark that her Saviour has not died for her in vain."

"But I am such a sinner ; oh ! Mr. Graham, what proof shall I give that I am now sincere?"

"God knows it, if we do not," he answered.

"But I should like to say, I should like to tell, how I wronged my son ; oh ! my son—"

"Mother, that is between God, you, and myself, I will not have it told—"

"But my husband, I have deceived him, he knows ; oh ! he knows——"

"My wife, that is between God, you, and myself, I also will not have it told."

"Confess to God, poor sinner—not to us; we wish to have gentle memories left on our hearts of your death-bed," said Richard.

"My daughter," whispered Lady Maria, after a few minutes' solemn pause.

"Mamma," said that soft voice, like clear music floating in the air, "take my thanks, my lot is so blessed with Richard Graham."

A faint smile came to those white lips—

"I think God will forgive me. Hasten what we have to do."

Glynne motioned to me to take my place by her pillow, while Selina knelt near Captain Forest. It appeared to me that mother and son were about to partake of this heavenly feast, each for the first time.

"Ah! Glynne," I thought, "you wanted but this to be perfect, 'as poor human nature can be.'" There was no interruption to the solemn performance, but that on my ear broke that bubbling sound, the bursting of a vein. I moved as if to place my finger on the place. She turned upon me an eager look, as if beseeching me to hold my breath, almost rather than she should lose a word.

God who sees all hearts, knows if her devotion was sincere; to us, it left the impression that "she was not lost to us, only gone before." I was absorbed in the bliss of this thought, as the voice of Richard Graham ceased. Then I was lifted up from the ground, and felt myself carried out of the room. The boundings of that great heart against mine, brought me to myself; and spite of the solemn act we had just performed, the remembrance of the last time Glynne had done this by me, rushed into my mind.

Placing a hand on each shoulder, as if to ease the weight, I raised myself, and put my lips close to his ear, saying, "I am your sister now, Glynne, am I not?"

"No," he said aloud, and in scorn.

My arms drooped, the tears rushed into my eyes.

At such a solemn moment, when all our hearts were so touched, so tender, why was he to be angry with me still? But I dared to say no more.

He laid me on my bed, as if I had been Neville.

"You are a child still, as innocent and

ignorant. Sleep now, I will call you, if the waving of a feather is only required." I knew he would keep his word, and fell at once into the deep slumber of one thoroughly worn out.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Then in life’s goblet freely press
The leaves that give it bitterness,
Nor prize the coloured waters less ;
For in thy darkness and distress
New light and strength they give.”

LONGFELLOW.

WHEN I awoke, though the blinds were down and the room darkened, rays of the sun in its western hemisphere flickered through the shutters, up on the wall, in fantastic gleams. I knew by this it must be very late—three or four o’clock in the afternoon. I rose up hastily, and from my lap fell fresh flowers, glowing and sweet. I collected them hastily, plunged my hands and face into cold water, smoothed my hair, and, with my flowers in my hand, ran down

stairs. I was afraid to think how long I had slept.

I went softly into the dressing-room. The summer wind blew in my face the scent of many flowers; and the lowered blinds flapped to, with the draught of the door. I shut it very softly, fearing there was too much wind. "All the windows," I thought, "must be open in the sick chamber."

The room was changed. There seemed nothing in it but flowers and soft air—all the paraphernalia of the sick room was gone; and as I looked further, but one of the two beds remained. On it lay stretched out in the unmistakable panoply of death, all that remained of Lady Maria Forest. I paused, shuddering with the sudden shock; then came the rush of thankfulness that her sufferings were over—and under the influence of this feeling, I could approach and gaze on the dead.

Few would have thought, tracing the beautiful lineaments, so soft and fair, that beneath all was most ghastly and loathsome. We knew that the soul within so fair a frame had been still more diseased. Yet the soft smile of peace and

pardon granted, rested on the lips, telling the gazer almost unmistakeably that the evil spirit was washed and purified in the blood of our Saviour, and gladly left its stricken house of clay for that place "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

"Nellie," said Glynne, "she was gone ere I returned from placing you on your bed. I knew it would be so, and that is the reason I carried you away. Little willing spirits should not be overtaxed. We have to thank the bursting of that blood vessel for her death being so peaceful. I see you are uneasy about it, but I tell you the truth. And now leave this room, and accompany me to join our friends. We all wish to thank you for the more than daughter's part you acted by her who is gone."

They need have said nothing to me. A little lonely thing! was I not grateful to God for giving me the place of child to those who were no parents to me? Was not that my duty in the world, as well as my pleasure, to gain love by deserving it? How otherwise was I to obtain that without which life was valueless? Having neither father, mother, brother, sister,

I was to create them for myself, and thanked God for enabling me to do it. There are people in the world, who mete out the measure of their love by that which is given them. "As much as you give, so will I give." "So many duties of love that you perform, so will I perform." "As many acts of kindness as you pay, so will I pay."

Again, there are others who acknowledge the love, the liking, the esteem; yet a little accidental elevation in the world's ranks, of the object, and all the pleasures of this liking are marred. "If we say we love, it will be thought interested love; if we acknowledge we like, some motive may be imputed to us. We must withhold our esteem; it may be thought flattery."

And in the common interchange of neighbourly attentions, how much that is absurd and over-strained mars the kind act—the good intention. He or she that is poor refuses a kindness of infinite benefit to themselves, and of nearly equal benefit to the bestower—(for he or she may be overflowing, and wearying to share their good things)—but pride, a very mean,

pitiful sort of pride, comes in the way, and the benefit must be refused, because it cannot be returned. As if prayers were not always required, always acceptable, and good payment too, for all neighbourly debts. By the frank gratitude and ready acceptance of some, can you trace a noble heart ; by the over-strained thanks, ever-repeating, and constant excusing, can you judge a mean heart. But that is not so bad as the pride which, whether it accepts or refuses the favour, smudges over the gift with a white-wash of speedy restitution, or smothers it in a mass of protestations, so that it becomes at last "a myth of an obligation." Then the obliged is pleased, his conscience sits easy ; he takes the favour, but has shown how utterly disagreeable it is to him to do so. And his neighbour goes away, not having the poor satisfaction of feeling he has been a neighbour. On the contrary, he has been insulting, wounding, and other things foreign to his nature, most contrary to his wishes. God bless all large families. In their nurseries are learned the earliest lessons of life—the giving and taking—the bearing and forbearing ; and, above all other

things, the trust in each other—and from each other, it spreads to their neighbour. There they learn how to give a favour—still better how to receive it; and from their childhood they know the secret how to help each other.

But this is a digression.

We had much to settle. I felt homeless and lonely. My guardian was to go to his mother. Glynne said nothing about my living with him. My Selina's house was becoming full of little children. But I waited patiently. I did not think they would be unmindful of my future lot.

Glynne took my guardian to his mother, after the last sad duties were over. He told me to prepare for going to town with him; but he clearly intimated it would not be for long. Selina made me promise to make her home mine, for want of a better. But my guardian said to me, before he left, "Nellie, may I depend on you for eyes when I want them?"

I promised; he not knowing the pleasure it gave me to think I had a positive duty before me. I would be his guardian; we would change places.

When we returned to town, I was shocked to

see my boy looking very ill—Phebe, as if she cried all day and night—and “the Lady,” in what may be called a cantankerous mood.

“Here was the whole London season gone, and she had been shut up half of it, by the pretended dangerous condition of a mother-in-law she never liked.”

“It was not pretended,” observed Glynne ; “she really did die.”

“But what I complain of is, she was so long about it. You have been absent three weeks to-morrow, and I have not been able to go to a single party.”

“I hope you will remember, then, when in similar circumstances, to be good enough to be a little quicker about it.”

“Don’t be absurd, my Lord ; and don’t jest about such serious things. It is very wrong.”

“I am constrained to acknowledge I thought you were jesting. I did not suspect you were in earnest, complaining that my mother was three weeks too long dying.”

“I said nothing of the sort. But you are like all men ; you will have the last word. I hate wearing black in summer.”

"Pray don't wear it, then. I shall not be offended."

"But it will look so odd. Won't it?"

"I should say, very."

"Harrington has been so extremely naughty. Would you conceive it, one day he called me a fat woman?"

"Excuse me: he really told no lie."

"It is that horrid pert Scotch girl who taught him."

"We will ask her," said Glynne, ringing the bell.

When Phebe appeared, she had my boy in her arms.

On hearing the accusation, "Me, my Lord!" exclaimed Phebe, with honest indignation, "no indeed; many a time have I put him in the corner for it."

"Pinmaurice calls her fat," said the naughty fellow, with his most lordly air, pointing to his mother.

"Neville," exclaimed his father, sternly. The boy had never seen his father angry with him before.

He sprang out of Phebe's grasp, and scrambled up on to his father's knee. They looked

in each other's faces ; the dark, handsome countenance of the father gazed sternly upon the beautiful beseeching glance of the boy. But there was no relenting. Not that the child wanted it ; he would rather have been asked to do right from his father's love, than from any threat. I saw this from the tears that were beginning to swell his eyelids.

"Neville will do what papa wishes, if papa will love him?"

"Yes, yes," said the child.

"Then that is enough, my boy. Go kiss your mother, and ask her pardon."

He did it on the instant ; and listened, moreover, with becoming gravity to a long exordium.

Then he returned to his father, and hung about him as lovingly as ivy clings to the great oak.

"Miss Harrington, suppose we go down and see Neville Grange?"

"I should like it of all things. Quite right, my Lord, you should visit your own estate. And, besides, I really will not go down to Harrington Court to be bored by those Grants."

We must presume this fear was the cause, in

some measure, of the disturbance in "the Lady's" temper; and that removed, or an enlivening and fortunate game of piquet, or last, though not least, our return, restored her to her usual state of peaceable inanition.

During the remainder of my stay in London, I went to pay a visit to Aunt Scann.

Truly it was not a matter of wonder any longer to me, that Aunt Scann was inadvertently always placing herself in other people's situations. Her own was about the most uncomfortable and disagreeable I should have thought mortal could possess, only I suppose nothing is so bad but that worse may be found.

She lived with a brother, in a cold, dark, clammy house, into which the sun never strayed—within which no cheerful, blazing fire was ever seen. The very light of a candle produced a glow, yet the glow was bitterly purchased. Mr. Scann was a miser. I thought he made his home so unbearable to frighten Miss Scann away. But for some secret reason she clung to him through it all. And, the more miserable the day, the more cross he might be, the more

cheerful and pleasant did she try to be. No, not try—she was.

“Truly,” said I to myself, “Aunt Scann reads us a lesson, as well as many other people, if we did but know. I think she persists in living with this half-dead brother, that she may keep within him a little flickering of life and charity.” She had not even the consolation of a pet animal or bird.

She had had a canary, but she did not at all wonder that in its situation it had died. She petted a kitten to the extreme verge of spoiling, but no sooner did it become a cat, than it eloped after a ray of sunshine, and “of course, my dear, had I been in the situation of that cat I should have done precisely the same.”

CHAPTER XIX.

" So fresh, so pure, the woods, the sky, the air,
It seemed a place where angels might repair ;
And tune their harps beneath those tranquil shades
To morning songs, or moonlight serenades."

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

NEVILLE GRANGE was beautiful. Placed on the sloping sides of a green and irregular hill, it looked down with an air of quiet grandeur on the village below, which was encircled by an ever-changing river, whose meandering could be seen in many silver turns from the windows of the Grange. Without being thickly wooded, there were magnificent single specimens of every forest tree, and picturesque groupings of various kinds. The masses of rich pasture showed off to advantage the exquisite shape and form

of the beech and oak trees, while the cool green hue refreshed the wearied town-dusted eyes.

The house itself was turreted, with case-mented windows, irregular parts added on. It seemed as if, at one time, a castellated mansion had been designed, but the builder's fancy had changed, and leaving the tower as it was begun, had carried on the fashion of an Elizabethan house. Its irregularity and quaintness was its beauty.

Within the little nooks and corners of its irregularity were trained shrubs and trees, rare for England to see flourishing out of doors. They were in somewhat wild luxuriousness. No one had lived there since Glynne's father had died.

It was pleasant to see the ardour and pleasure with which Glynne devoted himself to the restoration and beautifying of his ancestral home—his own.

But I did not think, as "the Lady" hoped, that he would the less desert his Irish property. He had duties there as well. She had vowed nothing should ever take her there; people were

always shot, she understood, in Ireland, whether they liked it or not!

We were very warmly welcomed in this country. The old family returned to their old halls; it was time indeed they should; and there was great sincerity in all the expressions of joy. For the Lord of Glynne's name appeared to command respect and esteem, even though he had never been among them since he was a boy.

So, as I said to Neville,—

“ See, what it is to be a good man and true —papa is loved here for what people have said of him ‘far away.’ ”

“ I will be a good boy and true. Phebe has not put me into the corner for a fortnight.”

“ Ha! indeed, if I was papa's boy I would never get into that corner again.”

Papa's boy took some heed of this remark, for Phebe complained to me “ she feared he was getting too good to live.”

Not so with “ the poor Lady.” At first, she was highly charmed at all the visits, and welcomes, and rejoicings. Then came the fact, that they were all Glynne honours. The name of Harrington was almost unknown—and she

an heiress ! It was sad, yet too true, she was more courted and visited for being a Glynne than a Harrington. In vain I tried to make her understand people would worship what was their own ; and instanced all the Harrington fashions at Harrington Court, without so much as a Glynne public-house. It would not do. People ought to know who she was, and what she was. Every lady asked her the same question—if ever she had seen such a beautiful, picturesque spot or house as Neville Grange ? until she really was sick of the name. They spoke of it as if it was their own, as if they had a right to show it off, and she was merely a visitor. And, after all, what was the place ? There was not a single room that matched the other. They were so oddly placed, and so different from Harrington Court, she was always going into the wrong one ; it was very fatiguing to have three terraces instead of one ; and the house was very dirty outside, covered with a sort of odd stuff which she should advise my Lord to have scraped off. If it was all smoothed, and brushed, and cleaned, like the handsome sandstone of Harrington Court, she should like it much better.”

"Oh! ye stars and little fishes," (though I do not know their affinity,) thought I, "for three days have I been trying to get the colour of this exquisite lichen, for my drawing of the Grange. A colour sufficient to make any painter crazy, with its half red, half yellow, half grey tone."

However, some people don't understand colours. I knew Glynne would say "the Lady" must scrape it herself, if it was to be scraped.

"I don't like the people about here; they are not a nice set, Uriel."

"Wherever one goes, one meets with odd people, and vice versa. It's a necessary part of existence that you meet with different characters and people, to prevent stagnation of mind and ideas. Would you like to have the quaker's disease?"

"Good gracious! no. What is it?"

"They never allow themselves to get into a passion. Though the spirit moves them, it must only be the spirit, not the flesh. Thus they become torpid; the blood flows languidly; and in the end they die of want of circulation."

"But I thought it was very wicked to get into a passion. I never do, on that account."

"I am afraid I rather like passionate people. But there are several sorts; some healthy, and not very wicked. A fine indignation now, that sends the blood spinning through one's veins"—

"Just as mine did to-day, at receiving that letter from Mrs. Grant. She signed herself my affectionate cousin."

"But she is your cousin."

"He is, to papa."

"She is nearer to you than I am."

"Not at all, Uriel; for my part I cannot see the use of some people, or why they are born at all."

"They have as much right to live as we have. Our lot is only hard, if we have to exist in every-day converse with those who are disagreeable to us."

"That I would not bear for one moment."

"Then we may be disagreeable to others ourselves."

"Oh! never—I hold that to be impossible."

"The Lady" was ennuyéed even with piquet. She thought she would like to teach Neville his

lessons by way of amusement. My Lord luckily heard the wish, and for once in his life was guilty of subterfuge. He absolutely blushed as he said eagerly—

“Oh, no, on no account. You would—you would suffer from the exertion I feel sure.”

She took some lessons in modelling from me, and her efforts had about as much beauty and shape in them, as that amiable porcine animal concocted by indulgent papas for good children, out of half the peel of an orange.

We accomplished the long-talked-of duet. That really pleased me. I felt as if I had taken a city. But she did not recover the exertion for a fortnight.

In fact “the Lady” really was growing too fat.

Her father even, under the influence of surprise, which is a sort of hammer that often knocks ideas into stupid people’s heads, made a remark upon the fear she did not take sufficient exercise for her health.

Yet Glynne never suffered any single duty to interfere with her drive. Let him be ever so busy, he was always ready at the moment, to

take her himself. And he never failed to ask me at dinner, if I had been good, and done my duty. That is, made her walk, once at least, if not twice, on each terrace.

I was wicked enough to think he and I were like show people, with a wonderful creature to look after, whose habits of life must combine extraordinary size with due attention to health. Never before, since, or anywhere, did I ever meet with a person like "the Lady." It seemed as if fate had decreed that everything should tend to increase a state of selfish inanition. Had she been a farmer's wife, the mother of thirteen children, what a blessed change for her.

By raillery, by persuasion, by reason, by example, by every mode I could think of, did I try to stir up emotion of some sort or another.

No little willing, excited Welsh pony, ever tugged so hard against a slow and stately dray-horse, than did I against her. And such work too. My cart was laden with heavy stones. I could have worked with a lighter heart, had I been sure I was carrying sweet apples, or even useful potatoes.

I read to her Thomson's "Castle of Indolence."

All she said was, "How nice!" She was asleep ere I got to the part I meant for her good;—at least, I suppose so, as she made no comment.

Only for Glynne's sake, did I go through such drudgery; only to pursue my revenge, did I lead such a life.

We remained there four months, during which time I paid one visit to Erlscourt, taking not only my modelling tools, but my boy, by especial request. The society there did not help me to bear "the Lady's" company better, though it gave me a due appreciation of what the home and life of an English nobleman should be. Brightened by an household spirit, not to be equalled for beauty, truth, or sense.

I made a very successful model, and went home with the hope of making a beautiful group, as well as furnished with a fund of sweet and fine thoughts. Noble natures spread incense—like the leaves of roses. It matters not whether living or dead, the scent remains, filling the brain with sweet and delicate images, befitting rose-leaves.

At the end of four months I had a letter from old Mrs. Forest. The care of her son was be-

coming too much for her. He had arrived at that critical point of health, when his hopes of again seeing the glad earth, and fair sky, depended on great care and nursing. He, therefore, now demanded my services.

I put the letter into Glynne's hands. He read it without remark. I was glad to be in request by some one. Any hopes and wishes regarding "the Lady" were crumbling away, like sand heaps on a sullen shore.

"I should like, Glynne," said I, "to go to my father's house—now mine. It is within so short a distance of London, that my guardian could have every advice quickly, and old Mrs. Forest would live with us. And, Glynne, I could have Neville, when you would spare him."

"You are of age," said he, briefly.

"May I write, and settle this with my guardian?"

"If you please."

But Glynne went away that day, and was absent a fortnight.

When he returned, he said,

"I have arranged your affairs; your house is ready for you. Captain Forest will meet you

any day you fix, Nellie, to be in town. His mother sheds tears of joy, at the prospect of a little daughter to help her cares."

"But, Neville.——"

"We shall be with you as much as possible. It is desirable that he never should be much at home——"

"Thank you, Glynne, a thousand times."

"Mr. Harrington is very anxious his daughter should go abroad. I think it not undesirable. When Miss Harrington has made up her mighty mind as to going, then I shall set my affairs in order. If possible, I shall leave Neville at home."

"Then he will be mine; but oh! Glynne, what will you do without him?"

It seemed as if it cost Glynne some effort to calm his feelings, for he did not answer immediately.

Then he said,

"If leaving my boy in your hands was my only grievance, this life of mine would be sufficiently tolerable at present"—I looked up at the pause. Some thought, like a dark cloud driven by a thunder-blast, was sweeping over his face. It was gone in a moment.

"The Lady," as was to be expected, received the news of my departure with all the pleasurable excitement of a new idea occurring to her. If she must lose Uriel, why should she not have some other species of companion? So she hunted up all the advertisement sheets of the "Times," and was so occupied looking them over, she forgot to say "good bye" to me.

CHAPTER XX.

"Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care.
Time but th' impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels wider wear."

BURNS.

I WAS in my first home, at least the first that I remembered. I had begged to go there alone. Glynne had had it all put in order for me. Moss welcomed me—old Anne received me in her arms. Was I twenty-one years old? or was I still dreaming in my green throne, and were all the events recorded in this book nothing but clouds floating over the brain?

I had passed through many trials—I had endured many emotions. I had thought and felt with an acuteness and vividness that left on my

heart their indelible marks, yet could nothing, nay, all of them put together, exceed the exquisite torture of this revival of the feelings of my tenth birthday.

My parents! had I not forgotten them? almost ceased to mourn for them with that innocent abandonment to grief a child might indulge? Had not their memories been swallowed up in a crowd of loves and likes of people whose names they knew not, had never heard?

I thought it no shame to spend the first night of my return home as I had spent the last when I left it. Like a very child, I called on my father and mother, and wept to think no voice replied.

So far this return to my first griefs was good. It enabled me the more clearly to compare my present state, after so much intercourse with the world, to that period when I was comparatively out of it.

I was obliged,—I could not help the impulse that made me, woman-grown, rise with the earliest light of a gusty October morning, and, gazing carefully round, to see that no eye looked on me, hastily swing up by the sweeping

boughs. In a moment, with hardly an effort, I was seated on my childish throne.

Then my life passed in review before me. Who can look back on eleven years and, with their hands on their hearts, say they repent nothing? The sudden tears of remorse smart more than any others. It is needful they should. Human nature is never so weak as when she tries to excuse herself. True religion is never so grand as when she probes her wounds to the innermost core.

And in reckoning up my faults, what scores of mercies had I not to place on the other side!

At ten years of age, I knew but four people in the world to whom love and fellowship were due and paid. I had but few duties—to love God and my parents. I had no great pleasures. Such as they were, they sufficed. At twelve, I had neither parents, home, nor any pleasure but the certain hope of some day dying. God permitted me now to reckon upon more than one home. He had given me the privilege of acting a trusted child's duty, by more than one adopted parent, and friends I could count in numbers. I must not bewail or murmur that I was still so

far from the goal of all my hopes and wishes—a restoration to my parents. Other work was yet before me. If with but one home I had duties to perform, how much more with two or three! If with four friends I had loving tokens to exchange, what stores of kindly feeling was it necessary to cherish and foster, when I had so many!

The night I had devoted to my parents' memory. This first visit, to mine ancient throne, to a retrospection of my past life, and the worship of God. To-morrow I would act child again, and look to see how the rule of the queen was going on in my ideal kingdom.

It was long since I had investigated its laws and territories. All sorts of strange plants might have taken root within. The queen should resume her acknowledged right over this realm, and every morning, seated in her green throne, a strict court of justice or censure should be held.

The cottage was very pretty, as a cottage. There was no grand display as at Harrington Court. There was not a grave and beautiful dignity about it, as at Neville Grange. That

house reminded me of Glynne himself. The rugged, but fine stone, the grand tower, the clustering turrets, the little roses and myrtles clinging so lovingly to the grey walls, and flourishing with all the luxuriousness of happy and careless lives, who knew that their supporter was almost imperishable. Such I knew would Glynne be to those who trusted him. The principal feature of beauty about my cottage was the great beech-tree, apparently but, to common eyes, a magnificent specimen of its kind. None knew the important throne it held within its mighty heart—a throne that settled the weal and woe of nought less than a queen. There were gabled windows to the cottage, each matching the other on either side the door-way. It was somewhat too formal for picturesque beauty, but the time was now come for me to think how to mend that.

A brook ran within sight of the windows, that in summer rippled over the stones, as if to prove it could sing as well as the birds. In winter, a liquid melody floated on the ear, with the soft gurgle of deep water, the prettiest of all sounds.

I remained a week alone. During that time many ill and foolish weeds were discovered up in the green throne, in the morning, which were undergoing the process of deep uprooting. The rest of the day was spent in outward and inward adornment of the cottage. A porch would impart a truly rustic air. A rose up one window and a myrtle by the other would do away with a little of its uniformity.

My dear guardian could not see and pronounce on its perfections, but old Mrs. Forest was charmed.

We must settle our mode of life. It was to be rational to the utmost extreme, yet combine the most healthy mode of living. It must be lively, amusing, yet remarkably sensible. It must be industrious, useful, yet neither exacting nor inconvenient.

There must be variety, yet no great infringement of rules. We must be neighbourly, but not too gay.

Well—when all was arranged, and we were settled, and all expressed themselves as scarcely ever so rationally happy before, I began to feel the listlessness of an easy life. Mine had been

so full of excitement, I might have expected this. It was an unusual feeling, and very uncomfortable. I had need to think of poor Aunt Scann, in her sunless, joyless, doleful house, to bring myself at all to order.

And my guardian, so tender, good, and patient, under the heaviest of all earthly afflictions, was it not excitement sufficient to administer to all his wants?

In fact, I believe both he and his mother spoilt me. Mrs. Forest's conversation was a sort of tuneful praise of me all day, which, gratifying at first, soon became wearisome. She was a worthy old lady, but verging to second childhood. I do not know what resolute measures the queen on her green throne would have had to take, to root out the plant of discontent in the heart of her kingdom; but fortunately Madame la Comtesse de Lannas came to England, with M. le Comte and a little count and countess.

Isabel was dear, warm-hearted Isabel still; and if she had become a little demonstrative in her words and actions, which anyone who did not know her might say proceeded from affecta-

tion, how could she help it? Did not M. le Comte gesticulate even to the sun, when that luminary deigned to show himself? And she was handsomer than ever, making Mr. Hamilton shake with poetic ardour even now—though he had married the pretty laundry-maid, and was the father of ever so many little light-blue eyes, as unmeaning as his own.

We lived that first journey up to London, and all our London life over again, did Isabel and I.

“I really think Captain Forest looks handsomer than ever, Nellie; he is such an interesting object;” and Madame la Comtesse spread out her fine hands, and sent an appealing look to the ceiling.

“Yes, but I fear he will never regain his eyesight. It was an explosion which caused the original injury, and while the eyelids escaped unhurt, and the lashes and brows have grown again, the sense of seeing seems utterly destroyed.”

“Poor, poor fellow! God be good to him; but he has you for his companion, Nellie, and, as Alphonse said to me only last night, ‘Vat

vant he more, ma belle?" And the Countess's shoulders had a spasmodic twitch, while her hands were expanded still more expressively.

"Cannot you imagine how pleasant it is to me to return some of his kindness, which began when I was but a few days old, Isabel?"

"Ah, Nellie, you are as usual thinking only of what you can do to serve others. And Selina, is she stronger, better? Does she ever now write sonnets?"

"She is becoming much stronger. You know her feelings were ever too much for her frame. She mourned for my disappearance; then she was sorrowful for that poor Lady Maria."

"Ah, that sad woman! As Alphonse says, 'make not bad odour of her name, *bien aimée*.' Yet what a woman she was——" and up went her eyes.

"Selina makes sonnets still," interrupted I, "and very good ones. Richard is charmed with them, especially the little, pretty, sing-song things she composes for her children."

"She really had a great taste for it, much more so than we had."

"And also it served the good purpose of diverting her mind to other matters."

"And you, Nellie, why did you run away? Why did you not marry that handsome, grand man?" and the Countess's shoulders appeared to me almost in danger of coming through her dress.

"I was afraid of the responsibility."

"But how could he marry——"

"How could Mr. Hamilton go and marry that gawky maiden, after being in love with you, my dear?"

"Ha, ha! did you ever see a man look so absurd the day we went to call. He absolutely had to whisper to her what to do and how to behave. As Alphonse said, who prides himself on his English, you know (especially the idioms), 'Sarve he right, *mon ange*.' Nothing very poetical in his establishment now, I fancy." And the Countess's hands expressed both contempt and disgust, besides a comfortable degree of self-satisfaction.

Our next visitors were the Bernards.

It may be that a little despondency was weighing on the heart of my guardian. A fear was

brooding over us, though none gave voice to it, that he would never see again. Thus the society of a Christian, in whom was no guile, such as Mr. Bernard, and the conversation of one imbued with all the attributes of Christian charity, such as Mrs. Bernard, came to him at a moment peculiarly fitted.

"Nellie, I cannot murmur in my heart, when that good man talks to me," said my guardian to me; "there is something in his voice so true, so earnest, yet so joyful in the certainty of his faith, that I think sometimes he must be as Father Abraham, and have talked with God."

"There are few like him, Noel (for so would he have me call him); he is alive to every thing passing in the world; learned, too, beyond most men; interested in all that is going on about him, yet is God never absent from his thoughts, as you may judge from his words."

"Yet, Nellie, he does not force his thoughts upon you, they seem spontaneous,—'out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh.' There is no advice given, no rules laid down, no sins dragged loathsomely to sight. He puts aside

evil; he walks with God; and his wife is like him. Truly, Nellie, you fell on 'pleasant lines,' when you made their acquaintance; and, among many other things for which I am your debtor, the gift of their friendship is not the least."

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Let no vain hope deceive the mind—
No happier let us hope to find
 To-morrow than to-day.
Our golden dreams of yore were bright,
Like them the present shall delight—
 Like them decay.
 JORGE MANRIQUE.

IN the following summer, after the London season, my Lord and Lady of Glynne decided to go abroad for a year. She had made the exertion once or twice of coming down to visit us at our cottage, but we were inhospitable enough to wish no return of such favours. Though I said if she came to a cottage, she must live as the cottagers did, that did not prevent her being a very troublesome visitor, bringing so many

servants, that I thought I should have to take up a permanent residence in the beech tree, as the only place left me. Then neither the age and infirmities of Mrs. Forest, nor the sad helpless condition of Captain Forest, made her see that she was somewhat in the way. Her ponderous presence was felt in more respects than one.

My boy and Phebe stayed with us sometimes for a month at a time, and proved of great use in amusing my guardian. But I grew sad at hearing he was to go abroad with his father and mother. I had hopes he would have been left with me. Phebe was, however, a host in herself in guarding him from all ills and disagreeables, and rather liked the idea of seeing "furrin parts."

"I shall be as wise as father then, and mither will never be able to pit in a word."

"The Lady" was very anxious to go abroad for the sake of her health, but she could not bear the idea of having foreign people about her. So she wished to persuade us all to go with her, that she might have proper people to consort with. She had had two or three companions to live with her. Few stayed more than a month.

One, I believe, was dismissed peremptorily, because she was so indiscreet as to "capot" "the Lady" at piquet—a thing she never suffered either my Lord or myself to do.

I wanted her to take Miss Seymour, but that lady was too conscientious to accept the situation:—

"Nellie, I should be sure to tell her that I think her selfish and silly, so don't urge me."

"But we must take people as we find them. There is no credit in living with people who are already better than yourself. You may do her good."

"Pooh, pooh! I am getting old now, and have slaved hard all my life; I do not see why I should inflict upon myself a harder task than any I have yet undergone, and that is—the care of a selfish baby weighing sixteen stones. Besides, you did her no good, little fairy Uriel, and who would try after you failed?"

"You credit me with too much influence."

"No, Nellie, I do not; for I look at 'the Lord of Glynne;' he was on that most dangerous pinnacle for a man's soul—a self-worshipper: his nature was great, in fact,

sublime for one merely human, he felt himself capable of any grand deed. He naturally revolted from low, insignificant actions—his mind was, like his personal appearance, almost without flaw; his intellect powerful, keen, generally above all others that he met—he felt independent of a God: you taught him the contrary.”

“I cannot think so, Miss Seymour.”

“Little Nellie, you taught me a few lessons, also. If you wish to know how your conduct affected me, I will tell you the impression I observed it made on my Lord of Glynne. As I have said before, he knew no God but himself. He, therefore, placed himself above all other mortals. He looked on them, as the eagle might be supposed to watch the flies toiling up and about the window panes. Having nothing particularly to do, he watched the flies on one particular pane. There was a little one, so tiny he hardly saw her at first; but she had a purpose. She was diverted from that purpose by nothing. Others fell down, flew aside, went back; steadily did this little thing go on to the top—only pausing to help, with her little might, those who crossed her path. Nellie, he was struck, as I

was, with a uniformity in the character of this little unpretending being. You had a motive, it was expressed in your eyes, clear as the heavens, from which the look came; they never cast a glance towards earth, but steadily gazed upwards, whatever of sin and evil was strewn in your way. Their clearness showed the intensity of your character. And yet, with the spirit leaning so willingly—nay, longingly—towards another world, there was no lack of interest towards those belonging to this one. You could do all, and yet more than they required, while you preserved your individuality as intact as ever. In short, Nellie, with your unearthly eyes, your intelligence, and intuition of what was best, your gifts or talents of music and sculpture requiring so little instruction, that they appeared to belong to the originator of both arts, all combined to make me think, sometimes, that you were a little spirit, sent to banish the evil demon of that house. Now don't interrupt me, because I have a great deal more to say: in all the little, absurd meannesses to which poor Lady Maria subjected you, there was an absence of even the perception of their being meant as insults, that

was very striking in one so young. This was rather like my Lord's own nature, though, as he himself allowed, he was guilty of all sorts of sins, to which, of course, you were an utter stranger."

"Glynne was not well brought up—that he always allowed—but I can see no affinity between his character and mine."

"There is always an affinity between fine characters. He wanted that sense of religion, which made you, a little, weak girl, twice as strong as himself, when it came to a struggle between you. Do you suppose, little Nellie, it did not strike that self-reliant strong-hearted man, as a wonderful thing, that a little white-faced child should withstand all his manifold attractions of mind and body, his yet stronger will, and passion, and elude his grasp, just as he had her most safe, and because she would not act a lie?"

"But I did say that lie; I pronounced those vows!"

"Did you so? something must have got the better of you for the moment."

"It is needless to say what now; I think Glynne was mistaken in thinking I was necessary

to his happiness. He might have placed me on a pedestal of his favour for a time, but I should have been as surely hurled from it."

"Not so, because, as I said before, the vital principle of religion actuates you, and that must conquer in the end. He felt this, and without knowing why, he wished to secure for his own, one apparently actuated by some principle of which he was ignorant."

"He knows it now. Glynne always attends church; he was mainly instrumental in inducing his mother to make her peace with God."

"I am glad he has discovered it. It is indeed probable, that disappointment may have done more to effect this, than had he married you."

"Then am I happy I so acted—otherwise I have had doubts."

"Is it these doubts which have caused the little alert Uriel to droop on her path?"

"How? Miss Seymour, I do not understand you."

"Nellie, I have told you all this for a purpose. The little stream that made all fresh and green wherever it meandered, seems drying up. There is scarce life in your actions now, Nellie;

there is a pause in your upward course. Tell me, what stone is stopping the course of that little sparkling fountain that gave verdure to all around it? Has the return to your old home caused you to weary and falter?

I could not answer—I was confused.

“Nellie, you cannot always expect to do right; you must be wrong sometimes, like the rest of us. You are, and have been, mourning over something you cannot mend.”

“It is so sad to see the Lady——”

“Nonsense, you have done your best to mend her ways. Fret no more about that.”

“But poor Glynne, all these years to bear with her——”

“He surely deserves it. He acted wrongly by you. He seems to have had no heed either way to the sacredness of marriage, thinking to marry you anyhow, and then taking up with a person for whom he cared nothing, from pique.”

“I have heard he did it—he married so soon, —because he thought,—my uncle did at least,—that I should return.”

“And a very wretched thing it was to do

To amend one fault, he commits another. Leave him in the hands of God."

"And are you really going out as governess again?" I asked, in order to turn the conversation. For she did not know as much about "the Lady" and Glynne, as I did. And really theirs was a very hopeless business, I thought.

"Yes, it is true. In spite of all my former philippics on the miseries, and troubles, and annoyances of a governess—in spite of a little competency (my sisters and I have each had a fortune left us, something like eighty pounds a-year, little Nellie, which, all joining together, made a comfortable income.)—I am going out again as governess."

"Ah! then, you also are sometimes discontented."

"May be, child. You shall hear. All our lives long, my sisters (I have three) and I, always descanted upon the hopes and expectations we should have of ending our days together. You had your goal of hopes and wishes (to get out of this wicked world, my dear—eh?), so had we ours. We never met, but we discoursed largely on the anticipation of such an epoch in

our existence. And, generally, I found, the further we were from our expectations, the more flowery and brilliant were our pictures. They had to earn their bread, as I had, all but the one who took care of our mother. We all contributed in proper shares for the maintenance of both. Ah! Nellie, it is such a grand feeling that of helping a parent! I would not have minded breaking stones on the road for my mother, though there was nothing remarkable about her; and, Nellie, she took snuff. Not romantic that, was it? Child, do not laugh at me. I cannot help my oddities. Well, one sister married, and is now a widow. My mother died. The charm of working so hard was broken then. I did not care to endure all my bothers for my own benefit. Luckily we were left that money. Luckily I thought. Now you shall hear. In the height of my delight, that I need no longer be a governess, might have this long-talked-of home in Cloudland, I forgot to thank God. Consequently the new home turned out very cloudy indeed. We four sisters had been so long separated, we had not an idea, not a wish in common. We all thought we had a

right to be head, and yet we did not know, any one of us, how to act as head. Having always been dependent and under orders, we were quite unable to know what to do with our unusual liberty and freedom, and yet ready to resent the slightest infringement thereof. So we quarrelled. We had nothing else to do. That was a God-like punishment, the curse of earning one's bread by the sweat of one's brow. There is nothing like work—so I am going out again. If I am to be scolded, and ordered about, and put on, I think I can endure it better from strangers than from my own kith and kin. Now, good bye—don't grow discontented or unthankful, otherwise you will find yourself in my predicament, namely, thankful that governesses are a necessary of life."

CHAPTER XXII.

"Can it be lightning? Can it be thunder?
For a light is all round the lurid Hall
That reddens, and reddens the windows all;
And far away you may hear the fall,
As of rafter and boulder splitting asunder."

OWEN MEREDITH.

PERHAPS it was as Miss Seymour said. The return to my home had brought vividly before me the experience of eleven years, and I lost heart in thinking I might have to pass eleven more such years.

"Well," said I to myself, sitting up in the beech throne, "I will ask Aunt Scann to come and see us. She will give me a lesson in gratitude."

Aunt Scann was highly charmed.

That best and most excellent of brothers (who appeared to others the embodiment of dried bones, crude vinegar, and very old mustard) was obliged to leave home on particular business. It would be highly satisfactory to Aunt Scann to come and taste country air, though, for her part, if she was in my situation, she should miss all the delights of London, so charming to youthful minds, exceedingly. Nevertheless it was a most apropos invitation, as, taking advantage of their absence, the servants would very properly take the opportunity of their situation of having nothing to do to clean up, &c. &c. To which I could not help remarking to myself, if I was in their situation, I would see the utter futility of the attempt.

It was indeed a very great pleasure to see the thorough enjoyment with which Aunt Scann inhaled the country air and summer blessings. She admired everything, and was never wearied of admiring the same thing a dozen times over.

"That tree, that old beech tree, Nevey, now, if I was in your situation, I would walk round it, just to have an idea of its beauty. My brother would be charmed with that tree."

My guardian smiled. He knew his uncle very well. I interpreted the smile into a thought, "He would be charmed to cut it down, and make it into money."

"And your daisies—never did I see such daisies and dandelions. Though in their situation, of course, they can do nothing but grow. Mrs. Forest, my dear ma'am, allow me to place you in my situation. Did you ever see such an expanse of gorgeous beauty?"

The poor old lady was incapacitated from seeing much beyond her nose; and, if she had, the scene of gorgeous beauty consisted of a little hay field, just about to be cut, seven acres in extent, gay with summer flowers.

"Everything seems to grow in the same luxuriance, Nevey. I declare yesterday I saw the most magnificent nettles I ever beheld in my life."

"I hope Nellie will have them cut down."

"I am sure I trust not. Nettles are weeds certainly; but these were so superb, in a beautiful situation, exposed to the full blaze of the sun. And what a sun it is here, my dear Nevey!"

"Is he not the same everywhere?" answered my guardian, smiling.

"Well, I don't know. Perhaps he ought to be. Indeed, if I was in the situation of the sun, I should favour no spot more than another. Our little court, now. Its situation is—"

"One of the most horrible in the world, Aunt Scann. I wonder how you can live there."

"My dear, my dear, we certainly have not your flowers, nor even such very fine nettles; but it's a house, you know, a house of a wonderful situation—"

"True, Aunt—it would soon kill me. I should become mouldy all over."

"Nonsense, my dear Nevey: I am never mouldy, I could not be mouldy. My dear and excellent brother, whose situation, as head of the house, of course gives him the lead, says there is not such another house in all London. What excellent cream you have, Nellie! I told the dairymaid, if I was in her situation, and had to take care of two such pretty cows, I should never seek for any other situation; and I hoped she did her duty as became her;

for oh ! my dear, when God places us in a particular situation, we ought therewith to be content."

Before they went abroad, Glynne brought Neville down to bid me farewell.

And he said he had a favour to ask of me. I granted it without hearing it. There are people in the world to whom one can safely promise an unspoken request.

"I wish you to model for me, while I am absent, the figure of a young—I suppose I ought to say seraph or Peri, for she must have wings. You are to imagine her as sent on some merciful and gracious message by her master. Her countenance, therefore, must be expressive of such mission. She has fulfilled it, and is joyful, about springing up again, with pinions half unfolded, when she encounters a dark spirit of earth. Nellie, the attitude of the little spirit must express a momentary deprecation, aversion, or fear. You are to perceive this by the crossed hands and half-averted, half-lowered head, as if she would avoid looking, courted no collision, yet was firm and triumphant in her hopes and faith. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I think I do. Am I to make 'Lucifer' as well? Is it to be a group?"

"Make me my angel first. If it is what I wish, and sufficiently expressive, he will not be required. But why say Lucifer?"

"I always like to take the head of everything for a model."

"Well! if you can imagine Lucifer, don't let me be a bar to his image being taken. I presume you know he ought to be made fearful and terrible-looking, and your conceptions lie all in the gentle, more graceful line."

"Milton's Lucifer is my idea of him."

"I leave it to you."

For awhile, the occupation and thoughts this work gave me, dispersed the vapours a dull heart or head had produced in me. Besides, the winter gave me more to do. My dear guardian suffered most terribly from neuralgia in the head, and his mother was helpless from rheumatism. So I thought I discovered that want of occupation had been the real cause of the disease.

"The Lady" was very good in writing constantly. And one great merit in her was, she rarely requested an answer. Unless I was by,

she seldom read her letters, it was so fatiguing. But writing them gave her a feeling of complacency ; she thought she did it well, and it was a safety-valve for the variety of incongruous thoughts that were running through her brain.

Though they were not worth transcribing, one I received about Christmas-day, gave me a fearful shudder, on account of the peril in which my darling boy had been placed.

“ MY DEAR URIEL,

“ I described to you in my last letter what I thought of Paris, which was truly nothing. The chocolate bon-bons, I must say, are much superior to any I have tasted at Gunter’s, or Fortnum and Mason’s. There is one peculiar sort. My dear Uriel, I will bring you a packet,—they are rolled up—no, not rolled up, but done up somehow, and have vanille-cream inside, sometimes burnt almonds. I assure you, my Lord was quite uneasy at the number I devoured. But as I told him, ‘ You are absurd, my Lord, no sooner is one in my mouth, than it is gone, I hardly know it has been there, it is necessary I should take another, to retain the

taste.' Papa also, at his request, remonstrated with me; but I gave him one, to prove that they were nothing; and he was so convinced (as I expected), that now he eats as many as I do. We went out a good deal while in Paris; but it was very stupid work. They all talk French, and all talk together; you cannot get in a word. You will be glad to hear I created quite a sensation, and flattered myself I dressed as well as any of them. I said to Pinmaurice, 'I have heard that Frenchwomen say, no Englishwoman knows how to dress. We will show them, Pin, what a real woman of taste can do.' Though I don't encourage familiarity with servants, you must not be surprised at my shortening Pinmaurice's name, it's so fatiguing to pronounce it all. And very often I have one of those chocolate bonbons in my mouth, and do not like to destroy the relish of it, by speaking. There are other bonbons—.' (But I will skip the discussion of them, and go on to the incident.)

"We took a château, so that my Lord could participate in the field sports to which he is so attached. Would you believe it, my dear Uriel,

there was not a single fireplace in it. I was very nearly sacrificed by cold, and insisted at last upon having a proper English blazing fire in my bed-room. How you will feel for me, dear, kind Uriel, when you hear the awful catastrophe that followed, and how nearly you ran the risk of never seeing me again.

"I sleep well, as you know. Fortunately, though I have often been extremely annoyed with him for it, my Lord is restless. You know, in this strange, odd, most uncomfortable country, the beds are not meant for two people. My Lord was, therefore, sleeping in the dressing-room. Imagine my awful shock when I saw him standing over me, and imploring me to rise. I was almost suffocated with smoke. 'Save me, save me,' I cried, unknowing what was about to happen, and cast myself into his arms. I have told him, that another time, under similar circumstances, he really must be more careful, and not alarm me so terribly. With the sudden shock, I did not know what I was about. I saw a great blaze and flaring; but, of course, awakened in that sudden manner, I could not imagine the cause unless he told me. He

wrapped me in a blanket. It was fortunate he is so strong a man, for he was enabled to carry me out of danger directly. Then I said, 'My Lord, my Lord, I implore you to tell me what is the matter.' 'The house is on fire,' he answered. Oh, my dear Uriel, imagine the shock. I might have been burnt to death. Instantly, all my presence of mind returned. 'My Lord, my diamonds ! have you saved my jewels ?' He could hardly speak, he seemed so distressed ; and he quite bent with suppressed emotion. 'Put me down ; go at once, my Lord ! I should never forgive myself if those jewels entrusted to my care, those precious heir-looms, should be lost.' He appeared to enter into my feelings, for he placed me immediately on a garden-seat, (we were now there,) and fled back. Thus I was left alone. My dear Uriel, never can I forget my sensations. Behind the next holly-bush might be a bandit, who had purposely set fire to the château for horrible, unknown, yet too-easily devised purposes ; and now the flames beginning to appear, I thought it best to scream, which I did loudly. The sound of my sad cries brought the whole household out in desperate haste, in strange

undress ; so fortunate for me, my Lord, who thinks of everything, had roused them to my assistance. I fell into the arms of poor Pin, who, overcome with fright to see me out there on a garden-chair, in a blanket, in such a state, became hysterical. Before we had recovered, my Lord appeared, with little Harry sleeping in his arms, and that good Phebe following, with his little bed, all dressed herself, and calm as if nothing was the matter. It seems she had been awaked by a great smell of fire, and had arisen and dressed herself to come and see what was the matter. The darling child never awoke. How blessed is innocent childhood, my dear Uriel. 'And the diamonds, my Lord,' would you believe it, he had forgotten them, calling the servants. True affection is best shown in hours of adversity. He thought nothing of those beautiful family jewels in comparison to my comfort. 'I thought,' said he, 'you were like Cornelia, and wanted what she called her jewels. I must go and save your father, and then I will think of your diamonds.' Poor papa, what a sad spectacle he looked. I had never before seen him without his wig ; indeed, I did

not know he wore one. Scarcely could I forbear laughing. Age is truly a very shocking thing. I am not sure if I shall wear a wig when I am old. I think those frightful grey hairs will be better ; they cannot fall off. We are all pretty well now. Of course, the château was nearly burnt down. It was so stupid of them not to have a real fireplace. My Lord's arm will bear the marks always. Phebe, the only one of us who can dress it, describes it as a fearful burn. Absolutely, the whole of my room was on fire, when he nobly rushed in to save the diamonds. But pray tell me, who is this Cornelia ? Is she an ancestress ? I never remember to have heard of her before. I am not jealous, you know, my dear Uriel, and, of course, never could be, but I should be glad to know something about her, and how she is connected with our family jewels. Papa still keeps poorly. Between you and me, he has never recovered the shock of having forgotten to put on his wig.

“ Yours, &c., E. H. G.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

"It wants but effort of the active mind
To people earth and heaven with ministering sprites.
The young Aurora with her rosy cheeks
Sits as of yore, at portals of the morn ;
And thoughtful Hesper, with her starry eyes,
Looks as in olden time from day to night,
And makes both beautiful."—MACKAY.

"THE LADY" did not write again for some time, but Phebe was very constant in her correspondence, and seemed to be already heartily tired of "furren parts." She described Glynne's burns as of a much more serious nature than "the Lady" did, and also said that old Mr. Harrington had really never recovered the shock (not of forgetting his wig), but the fright altogether. To use Phebe's own phrase, "she

thought the old gentleman was settling up for death ; he was much older than any one took him for, having used all the sense he had to make believe he was young, which was the surest way to knock one down sudden."

She did not write again for a month, and I was beginning to be uneasy, when I had a note, dated London, from her.

My boy was to be my boy now, for good. Living abroad did not agree with him, and "the Lady" would not come home, therefore she parted from him willingly ; besides, he was to go to school. Glynne came with him. He was thin and pale, and looked as if he had gone through a severe illness. He could not remain long, as he felt certain Mr. Harrington was not in a condition to be left only with "the Lady." Though my model of "the Messenger Angel" was not complete, not even the one figure done, much less "Lucifer" begun, he asked me to let him take it back with him to Rome. He had a fancy that it should be executed in marble, and what further there was to be done any good sculptor could manage ; besides making two

or three little alterations, my model being not quite in accordance with his wishes.

I was well content to let it go. I had enough to do to prepare Neville for school.

When he was gone there for the three months after Easter, under the chaperonship of Aunt Scann, my guardian and I made a tour of visits. First we went to my uncle's. The age of theories was in some degree over. There had come upon my uncle that fear, which must in some measure knock at the hearts of all parents. Namely, if the means used for the education and benefit of the child were such as would most conduce to the well-being and future conduct of the man. As an anxious father sends out from the parental roof child after child, to take his place in the world, it is a time of greater fear and apprehension to him than all the former periods of his child's life. The final formation of the character takes place then, and whether for good or evil, a short time proves. Of Madame la Comtesse de Lannes my uncle was justly proud, but he could not hope that all his children would turn out as well, or have a fate so happy. While they were little, he enjoyed their innocent hilarity

as a child dotes upon its playmate. When they became responsible beings, then did the anxious father ask himself, "How many shall I meet in heaven?"

My aunt was my aunt. She was rather more aged than my uncle, and seemed sooner put out by trifles. His character had not even a vestige of impatience about it.

My guardian was glad to get away, there were so many children, and so much noise.

He was very sensitive, I began to fear about the nerves and organs of the head, as if some other injury had been inflicted on it besides the loss of his eyesight.

From thence we went all the way down to the north, to visit Mr. and Mrs. Bernard. It was very pleasant to be so welcomed, and to be, at last, in my rightful position among them all. The mixture of spontaneous affection yet acknowledged respect was amusing, and gratifying at the same time.

Mrs. White wanted to throw her arms round me and kiss me, but she began a curtsey; so I was obliged to put my arms round her neck, and she wept, under the influence of many

mixed feelings, because, of course, Phebe was with us.

The Serjeant, never a man of many words, had but few modes of expressing his pleasure. But it was noticed he always kissed Phebe twice at a time: "one for me and one for Miss Nell," said Phebe. To which the Serjeant assented. Mrs. Blaize I did not know; she was becoming a rosy, comely matron: I did not think the children altered in the least, which was accounted for, by the fact that these were two new children. My little quondam friends came flying in shortly after, in the highest state of excitement, shouting out "Miss Nell! Miss Nell!" Now I had to be surprised the other way: and I admired their growth and robust appearance, to their mother's manifest pleasure. I did not see Mr. Blaize until Sunday. As he must make himself particular in some way, he was now highly conceited; but as it was harmless conceit, and served to keep him in good courses, it was desirable to pass it over without comment. Indeed I observed that Mrs. Blaize made use of the little weakness as a very efficient agent in controlling him.

"Mr. Blaize was not to be seen in such company;" or, "Indeed, Mr. Blaize, you would never lend yourself to such a thing, I know."

"It is all very well for farmers and such like, but Mr. Blaize is much above that." So that, under this influence, Mr. Blaize thought, and no doubt felt, he had a great deal of family dignity to keep up; and Mrs. Blaize being ever on the watch it should be kept up, it was so done.

But Mr. Bernard said he really was a very good man of business, in one way especially—he was very punctual and exact.

Mrs. Blaize never said much, when this was recorded in her presence, for in former times she had been heard to moan over certain hours in the day; one threatened her with a beating, the other with Mr. Blaize's certain departure for the public-house. However, now they were very happy, but Mrs. Blaize was mistress. That was a very good thought giving her the house.

As for young Archie Allison, he had no eyes for me now. He could think of, and look at no one but Phebe, and if Mr. Grant had been

curate, young Mr. Allison would have been lectured for staring all church-time at Miss White, instead of minding his Rubrics.

At first Phebe treated him with the highest disdain. To leave Miss Nell, or the chance of having the sole charge of the young Glynne when he was at home for the holidays, for the love of the grandest man in the world, was "a feckless thing indeed !"

But before we left the village, Phebe had condescended to walk with him once or twice. Moreover, he and his mother had been invited to a solemn tea at the Whites, at which Phebe presided as high-priestess.

Finally, as we left the village, on our journey home, Phebe waved her handkerchief, half-timidly, to a head peeping over a hedge ; while she informed me, at night, "Mither had been sore angered at her thinking so much more of Miss Nell and the darling boy, instead of her ain parents ; and father had hinted they were getting auld, and should want Phebe to be near them, their last days."

" Which you can be, you know, Phebe dear, settled at Archie Allison's farm."

"Hoot! Miss Nell, I never thought to be angered at ye."

We stayed a fortnight at Erlscourt, and finished with Selina, whose children had hearts like her own. They vied with each other, in their little tender ways, to wait on and amuse the dear, blind uncle, as they called him; and would court to stand by his chair, while he passed his fingers over their little profiles, and guessed who was like papa, and who was like mamma. And joyful were the cries, and much the surprise, when he confidently asserted, that Selina was more like her mother than any, and would be her exact image, hair and all. There was a genuine, holy happiness in this house that did me good. They thought not much of themselves, while they knew their example was spreading; like the gentle stir that a soft wind makes over still waters, so did their neighbours feel their hearts moved with the wish to be like them.

I found a foreign letter waiting for me on my return home. The hand-writing I knew, though I had never had a letter from Glynne before. The firm characters were unmistakable, if seen but once; and without pretending to the art of

divination, I could have told that the writer was distinguished for originality of some sort by it. I looked at the letter for some time without opening it, wondering why he wrote to me. I wished some one was by—Selina, Richard—one to whom I could say, carelessly, "Open that letter, and read it first." Then if there was any thing strange, any odd event—a misery to hear, a happiness to be told—I could bear it better. It would be lessened—I mean the shock.

It must be opened, surely it was of importance, or why did he write it?

It was done at last, in a sort of desperation. Within was "the lady's" scrawling, ill-formed characters all over.

Glynne had only directed the letter. No—stay.

There are a few firm lines in the midst of the faint, ill-designed ones. "We talk often of you, my dear Uriel," wrote "the Lady," "and I always tell my Lord there is no one I like so well. And when I ask him the reason, he says, 'I suppose it is because she seldom thinks of herself.' It is such a pity, dear, that I am always obliged to do so, otherwise I would try

to be like you.' Then came Glynne's remark. "Reasoning by analogy, Nellie, the seed sown is budding now. I tell my Lady, except in point of size, she can soon imitate you ; and she is going to set about it. Wish us success, or you are no true Nellie."

The poor Lady ! how nice of her to begin to think at all. Well ! this was news indeed, and ought certainly to have been heralded in by Glynne's handwriting.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"The sweetest joy, the wildest woe, is love.
The taint of earth, the odour of the skies
Is in it. Would that I were ought but man!
The death of brutes, the immortality
Of fiend or angel better seems than all
The doubtful prospects of our painted dust.
And all morality can teach is—bear.
And all religion can inspire is—hope."—BAILEY.

"NELLIE, it sounds ungrateful, but I am glad to be at home," said my guardian. "I can go about here by myself, and be no trouble to you."

"You know you are no trouble."

"Thanks, sweet Nell."

And my guardian sighed, as if a sad thought swelled his heart too full. Mrs. Forest was much confined to her room, sometimes not able to leave it for days. As her memory had failed her, and she only received my visits and those of her son's, as a child might delight in the sight of some new toy, we left her much in the charge of a faithful, old servant, whom we knew loved her.

Aunt Scann had, of course, gone home, to the society of the best and most amiable of brothers, besides the delights of such a lively home.

It was now for the first time in my existence that I felt what was meant by life. That one could pause and breathe in the calm serenity of a wise enjoyment.

If we were not particularly lively, we kept such feelings for Neville's holydays. There is nothing so good, I am persuaded, to sensible, grave minds, as a little, thoughtless, child-like, merry time. It acts as a refreshing sleep does to a weary body. It performs the same office to the brain, as a thorough painting and papering freshens up an old house. I was always

a child with Neville, and ran up one side of the beech tree, in about the same time he did on the other. And whichever reached the throne first, bestowed kisses, as many as wished, on the other.

My boy was so good.

"Nellie," said my guardian, "you have had a visitor?"

"Yes, Noel; it was young Mr. Beauvilliers."

"Is he handsome, Nellie?"

"Oh, very, like the picture of some strong young hunter of the woods."

"And good is he?"

"Oh, Noel, he is a Beauvilliers; who ever heard of their being otherwise than good?"

"Does he come a wooing, child?"

"No, certainly not, Noel. He came to see how I was progressing with the model of little Erle and Bear."

"But I think it will end, in his trying to commit the theft of stealing you from me, my Nellie."

"Oh, no, he has no such design in his head. Do you think, with so many pretty cousins, and lovely young ladies all round him, that he will

come and woo a little myth maiden, such as I am."

"But they tell me, you have grown pretty, Nellie. Come here; may I run my fingers over your profile, and feel your hair, your figure?"

I knelt by his chair, half blushing to think that he still considered me such a child. But he could not see me.

"Your hair seem as thick as ever, Nellie; is it the same in colour?"

"A little darker, fortunately."

"Then must it resemble the chesnut hue, with which all painters love to crown their angels. Your waist is too small, surely, Nellie."

"No," I replied, somewhat embarrassed; for he kept his arm round it. I was a prisoner. "I am still very little, altogether."

He made me no answer.

My guardian did not know that when he thought, his forehead contracted, and the temples throbbed. Deep lines showed themselves, as if the skin was withered with sears of wounds.

Involuntary he tightened the clasp round my waist, and I could see the drops of perspiration,

the constant tell-tale of his intense sufferings, beginning to gather. I put up my handkerchief to wipe them away.

He smiled gently, but the furrows remained.

"Nellie, I must speak to you seriously. My mother is old ; it is a wonder to us all, that she lives on. I am helpless, useless, but even such as I am, the link, or tie, makes a home a business for you. But suppose I die, Nellie?"

"Ah ! no, Noel ; what should I do?"

There was a shock, as if some sudden emotion had smitten my guardian. The deep lines disappeared ; though the sightless eyes were void of expression, yet were they turned eagerly towards me, his whole face glowing.

He murmured something to himself. I caught but a word or two.

"You know I am your eyes ; I could not, would not leave you ever, Noel, neither must you talk of dying, for I have now no tie or care but you."

"But, Nellie, I may die. This pain—my pain is sometimes so terrible, I feel death must end it. Nay, interrupt me not, while I have strength to say it. Should it prove so, if it

weakens me, as I feel each time it does, almost to the grave, you will again be left lonely."

"No, no—"

"Hush, child! now if you will but suffer Mr. Beauvilliers—"

"No, not twenty Mr. Beauvilliers."

"One would be 'more dangerous to me, Nellie, than twenty—"

"Ah! there, you allow it, thank you, Noel; you confess so far you cannot do without me. Pray, release me!"

"Stay one moment, Nellie. Is it true, you have no heart?"

"Glynne told you that," I answered, indignantly.

Noel smiled.

"No, it was Selina. I asked her a question one day."

"What was the question, Noel?"

"I wronged Selina, do you know that, little Nellie?"

"I know more; you were wronged yourself."

"Ha! who told you my story?"

"It matters not. What question did you ask Selina, with which I have to do?"

"I asked her, if you and she did not despise me for the mean and despicable act of engaging the heart of an innocent, guileless child, and then—"

"Forgetting her," I put in, as he paused.

"No, not forgetting; good heavens! no, my memory was too tenacious. Some day I want to tell you my story, Nellie; I must seem so base in your eyes."

"I tell you, I know it all; and as for thinking basely of you, I happen to feel sure—"

"Well—"

"I happen to know—"

"Well, Nellie—"

"I don't think at all basely of you—just the contrary."

"My Nellie!"

"Oh, don't; but—but—there is one thing; it was strange of you entangling so young a girl into an engagement."

"It was, Nellie, it was—but the fact is, all Portsmouth was ringing with the beauty and desolate condition of this pretty young thing. I went to see her, just out of curiosity. With all the ardour of a sailor, I rushed, pell mell, into

any scheme to save her. I saw her soft heart stealing out of her eyes : I knew the bets that were being made about her, as to who should carry off the prize. Though I had not spoken one single word to her, I took my chance, (the only one I had,) to rescue her from these careless, somewhat coarse-minded fellows. Good-hearted in their way, but quite unfitted, any one of them, to be the guardian or husband of so refined a creature. I took my chance also, when she accepted my offer, of her mind being equal to her person. You know I could not say I loved her, though I had abundance of admiration and pity to spare. You can only love that of which you know the value—as I do you, Nellie.”

“ Ah ! I see ; you made Selina engage herself to you, to escape being the wife of any of these other people, who only thought her a pretty high-born girl.”

“ Yes, I was just going to sail ; I saw enough of her heart through her eyes, to know that the poor little thing only required something to love to be quite contented and happy. She was so young.”

"But very firm," said I.

"Yes," answered Noel, sighing heavingly. And the brow became corrugated with lines. I took advantage of his abstraction to spring up, and free myself from his clasp.

"Ah, Nellie, you hate me," he exclaimed.

"No, I am tired of kneeling."

"I wish, I wish—"

"Noel, what do you wish : anything that I can do for you ?"

"Nothing that you can do ; but I wish you had a heart."

"It is very unkind to say I am heartless."

"Selina thinks it."

So I went away, wondering both at my guardian and Selina. But no thoughts brought me any ray of reason on this speech.

Only my guardian grew restless and uneasy. He would colour, and his face be turned eagerly to the door when I entered. And if I came near his chair, he would grasp my dress, and detain me. I did not think ill of him. How could I, knowing what poor Lady Maria had confessed in her mortal agony.

CHAPTER XXV.

“Oh! let the soul its slumber break
Around its senses, and awake
To see how soon
Life with its glories glides away,
And the stern footstep of decay
Comes stealing on.”

JORGE MANRIQUE.

SUDDENLY two events occurred, even in one week. . Phebe announced her intention to get married “upon young Archie Allison; solely caused to do so,” quoth she, “because mither and father couldn’t bide any mair wi-out her.”

High rose the anger and wrath of the young Glynne. Said he, in lofty scorn—

“Phebe, you’re a humbug.”

“Humble or not, sir, I shall be aye proud I was your nurse.”

"Remember you marry without my consent."

"Deed and I hope so, Master Neville. I wad be sorry if ye parted easy wi' me."

This being unanswerable, they kissed in token of forgiveness and fresh amity; and Neville forgot part of his anger, in anxiety to choose a proper dress for the bride elect.

The other event was the sudden death (they seem to go together, marriages and deaths) of Mr. Scann. He died apparently of damp and mildew. So aunt Scann came to live with us, the daisies, dandelions, and nettles. And she basked and sunned herself in full enjoyment, even while she mourned over the loss of the dearest and best of brothers, purring with inward satisfaction on all the fresh, sweet arrangements of her room, but never permitting one syllable to pass her mouth in reference to the dull dolefulness of her past home.

"Surely, aunt," said my guardian, one day, "no one but you could have borne such a life with so much patience."

Then gleamed forth an expression in aunt Scann's face that made it ever more saint-like to me. It told the tale of her forbearance,

even better than the simple words in which she answered—

“My dear nevey, Daniel—your uncle Daniel—just as he was dying, turn’d his eyes and looked at me. A smile came to his lips, such as I remember him to have had when a boy, and he said, ‘Thank you, Anne.’ Yes, he said, ‘Thank you, Anne.’ I would not have changed situations with the Queen of England, nevey, when I heard those words. That is why I lived with him. He was not altogether cold, and shut up within himself. He said, ‘Thank you, Anne.’ My dear nevey, had you been in my situation, could you have wished for more?”

Good aunt Scann! she kept green one spot in the heart of that withered old morsel of mortality, and it sprouted forth for her one little bud. No doubt, it bloomed fully in another world.

Aunt Scann suited Mrs. Forest. She babbled on all day, about one thing and another, and Mrs. Forest listened, as children do, to a favourite tale.

Glynne came as usual about this time to see his boy and us. He meant to take Neville to

Ireland for his holidays. "The Lady" had found a friend whom she much loved and delighted in, and could not therefore bear to part with her, the length of time it would take for this journey; moreover, she loved Rome, and all its luxuries, and indolent ways. She began to like foreigners, though she still was incapable of conversing with them. But they amused her; their ways being different to the Anglo-Saxons, and novelty ever held "the Lady" in a pleasing thrall. We forgot to ask about Mr. Harrington. None mentioned his name.

It is sad to live and create no interest in any heart.

Glynne was grave, after a very uncomfortable fashion. He would sit and watch me, as I waited on Captain Forest, with an intensity that caused me to feel both awkward and constrained. And Noel, Captain Forest, was still in that mood. I began to think something; at all events, I wished Glynne would go away; he did not please me by the ward and watch he kept over me. I bid even Neville farewell with alacrity, for he was the means of carrying his father

away. When Glynne brought Neville back to me after the holidays were over, he was utterly different to what I had ever seen him before.

"How ill your father looks, Neville; is anything the matter?"

"My father is such a brick, Nellie."

"I never allow slang, you know, Neville. Tell me, has he been ill?"

"Ill! my father ill! Glynnes are only ill once—when they die."

So he would say no more, and I again felt pained and foolish under Glynne's strict scrutiny.

One evening he said to me, in that cold, calm voice, that always cut into my heart—

"I should think Forest will hardly be alive when I pay my next visit."

"How!" I exclaimed, startled with a sudden rush of fear.

"You are killing him by inches—oh, Nellie, of the heartless gnome race. Let it suffice. You have taxed one human heart to its utmost limit of self-sacrifice; have compassion on another better, purer, but not so strong. Go, the one single flower that bloomed in my stormy, stony

path of life, you plucked up by the roots. Go, you and I are parted for ever."

And he left me abruptly and in anger. I wished, too, to be vexed, indignant; but on the contrary, a vague, timid fear oppressed me. Parted for ever!—Why?—What reason was there that we should be different to what we had always been?—How could anything I did prove a sacrifice for him to bear? I was lost in conjectures, and wearied with perplexed, not to say ill thoughts. To dissipate them, I knew the only remedy was occupation. I went to the studio, and chipping and chiseling, thought how lucky were those who were under control. Being ordered about was a fine thing for health of mind; to be dependent on others very good and proper for the soul. It was not comfortable to be solely responsible; to be master and mistress at one and the same time—to be queen, king, and all to boot. If I was under some one's control, I should not now be answerable for Glynne's displeasure. When one's mind is not good, the whole body goes wrong. My fingers chipped what should have been untouched, and chiseled that which ought to

have been left alone. Suddenly there was a sound of wheels; I threw down my tools and ran out, arriving in time to see Glynne's carriage driving away. Gone—he was gone, without one word of farewell, without a token by which I might tell he repented of his harsh words,—that at least we parted friends. By a sudden, uncontrollable impulse, I ran up the beech-tree, climbed high as it was possible. For a quarter of an hour I could trace the carriage by the dust it raised. Then an envious turn hid even the cloud of dust from sight; was it possible Glynne and I were parted for ever?

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ By your truth she shall be true—
Ever true, as wives of yore ;
And her ‘ Yes ’ once said to you,
Shall be yes for evermore.”

E. B. BROWNING.

I **MUST** have been long absent, for Noel looked wearied and pale with waiting ; while aunt Scann greeted me with a burst of wonder, almost upbraiding.

“ My dear, where have you been ? my poor nevey,—waiting for his draught, and it’s long past the tea hour, and, indeed, such a wonder, such a situation.”

“ You have been ill, Noel, you are in pain now.”

“ I am faint, Nellie, that is all ; order tea,

and I shall be better. Glynne left a message with aunt Scann for you."

"Yes, my dear, he did. Conceive my situation when he came in to say he was going. 'Dear me,' says I. 'Certainly, Miss Scann,' says he, bowing in his grand way, 'you are dear to us all.' Think of that now, Nellie, darling,— 'dear to us all,' and I such a useless old woman."

"Nay, aunt."

"Well, my dear, to be sure, Daniel said— 'Thank you, Anne.' But here is the urn. She makes tea so nicely, nevey."

"I have no doubt of it, aunt. Nellie, you brought some roses into the room."

I took them to his chair, kneeling down beside it, as was my wont, while I placed one in the button-hole of his coat.

"Hah! that is it, the very situation; hold her hand, nevey, while I read you this letter."

We both laughed, aunt Scann seemed so suddenly excited.

"Don't laugh, children; you are naughty. My Lord told me himself to make you do it."

I would have shrunk from Noel's side, but he held me fast.

"Is this the message to Nellie?" asked he, also tremulous from some unknown cause.

"Of course, nevey, he writ it down, saying I should not remember it; and, indeed, he never said a truer thing. Where are my spectacles? Of all the spectacles I ever met, mine are the ones for getting into strange situations.—Oh, here they are peeping out. I remember now, I wound my worsted on them, wanting a shred of paper."

"Shall I give Noel some tea first?" I asked. Something told me to delay hearing that message.

"No," said Noel, firmly, "I will have no tea until I hear what Glynne has to say." And he kept me prisoner with his arm round my waist.

"Quite right, nevey; that was my Lord's own order. They're slipping out."

This last remark referred to the spectacles, and they shortly appeared. Not, however, being accustomed to be made into balls, they were somewhat out of shape; and a little time was spent in straightening them, so that they would

sit on their rightful place with dignity and ease. Meanwhile, Noel held me fast, placing roses in the braids of my hair with the other hand.

"Now, nevey, now, listen."

"I listen, aunt."

Aunt Scann read aloud—

"Forest, as you sit there, Nellie kneeling by your side, hold her fast, and ask her to be your wife. You love her, but dare not tell her so, fearing she might say 'yes' from compassion. Your love is worth more than that. She will tell you so truly, if she thinks as I do. Meantime, if I deserve anything from either of you for withdrawing the veil from both your faces, if you are happy in the prospect of being one in heart as you are in thoughts and dispositions, you can repay me fully. But it must be done effectually. Thus,—remember, as one numbered with the dead.

"GLYNNE."

"P.S.—Aunt Scann, leave the room."

She read all this through as the child reads its task for the day.

It was only when she finished the postscript that she appeared to understand the purport of the letter.

“ ‘ Aunt Scann leave the room ! ’ Why, that is me. Why am I to leave the room ? Dear me, what a situation ! Nevey, nevey, oh, don’t ! I must leave the room, I see, of course. Why did I not see this before ? But my Lord is one of God Almighty’s unaccountables, and knows everything ! I am going, nevey ; where is my ball ? Oh, if I was in their situation, and they in mine, what an awful situation we should all be in, if I did not do as my Lord says, and leave the room.”

Noel held me fast.

“ Nellie, it is true. I love you as something priceless. I love you as if you came straight, a gift from God. I love you as men love eyesight. I love you past the power of mortal tongue to tell, or life to prove how much I do so. Say, will you do Glynne’s bidding ? ”

“ What is that ? ” I whispered.

For in truth, I was in a dream. Aunt Scann’s deliberate matter-of-fact reading of the letter bewildered me.

"Will you be my wife? Ah, Nellie, I am ashamed to ask it. Glynne was right in thinking I could never have the courage to speak, and has taken this strange, but effectual mode of upsetting my scruples. Forgive me, that I take every advantage of the strength he has given me. But hear me, even in the midst of the sweetest hopes, remind you of my maimed condition—helpless, blind."

"Ah, it is that, Noel, I care to marry no one; but I cannot leave you."

"Oh, woman's nature, how unerringly you fulfil the conditions for which God created you. Then be it so. Even to be my life, my support, my eyes, will you be my wife?"

I think I said "yes!" I know not quite. There rushed through me the thought, "now we must be all or nothing to each other," what could he do without me?

Yet even with this thought came another, so terrible in its naked sudden flash of light, I was appalled at the wickedness of it.

"I must go. Oh, release me, Noel!"

"Go, Nellie, your willing heart I must have, or nothing."

"You shall! you shall!" I whispered, hurriedly. "You must save me, Noel."

"From what?" he asked, eagerly.

"From myself—oh, so terrible, so sinful!"

"Hush, Nellie! You are excited, my Nellie, my darling, my wife-to-be! For one fond moment let me feel this ecstasy."

"Oh, let me go, and pray for me."

"So I do, hourly." His voice expressed misery, and the lines on his forehead deepened with pain.

"I am your wife, if you will have me," I said, with the hand pressing down the beating of my heart. "You must be teased no more to-night, Noel. See, I will call aunt Scann, and we will have tea. To-night I will question myself. To-morrow you shall know all that is in my heart, and the meaning of that sudden cry for help. You must be calm, Noel,—my charge, my care, my all in this world."

"Your hand upon it, Nellie, I hear the truth to-morrow."

I placed my hand in his for a moment, and then broke from him, calling aunt Scann. We said but little, any of us, for the short time that

followed ; yet aunt Scann shook her head at me many times, and would whisper, at favourable moments, "Do as my Lord bids you. It is of no use gainsaying my Lord ; he knows the best situation for us all."

That night was memorable to me evermore. The great struggle of sin and passion that assails so many human hearts tore mine with contending emotions all that night, leaving me dismayed and stricken with their violence and guilt.

"Nellie," said my guardian, as I stood hesitating to advance and greet him, next morning, "I hear you ; do not fear to come near me ; I have a plan to propose to you. But first some questions to put ; will you answer them ?"

"Yes, Noel."

"Glynne said you were not to marry me from compassion, but love ?"

"Yes, Noel."

"This you cannot do ?"

"I ought to love you more than all the world besides."

"Yes, Nellie, if you are my wife."

" I said those vows once, — once, Noel, before God and man. It does not seem to me that I can ever say them again, and he—he—living."

" Ha ! I understand. Nellie, I question no more ; I will leave the probing of your heart to another heart as sensitive as your own. This is my plan. Will you go to Selina : to her confide everything ? Speak of Glynne, tell of this sudden shock to you, of my love. By her decision I will abide—"

" But you, how can I leave you ?"

" I have aunt Scann. Besides, I have long had a secret, even from you. I shall take the opportunity of your absence to rid myself of it, if God grants me the boon I crave, for I must have no secrets from my wife."

And his voice sounded to my ears, as it always did, like the melody of happy music, calming the beatings of my wayward heart. I liked the idea ; to Selina I could tell everything. She would tell him : I, too, would have no secrets. That I could have been so wicked !

Selina welcomed me all the more, because I cmae, as she said, like an unexpected gift.

"Nellie," said she to me, after all was explained, and nothing more to be told, "it is lucky that you gave me lessons how to act in such a dilemma.

"What dilemma?"

"And yet I cannot call our cases the same," continued Selina, as if unheeding me. "I loved, or fancied I loved Captain Forest, a married man, out of indignation and outraged anger,—you love"—

"No, no, I love him not, in that way." I trembled with horror to hear such words so plainly spoken.

"You love Glynne for his good," continued Selina calmly, but firmly. "Ever since you pronounced those vows, he has held the first place in your interests; that is, he and all that belongs to him."

"Yes, all, all."

"For the Lady of Glynne you would sacrifice—"

"My life, if it would make her worthy of him."

"Even so, Nellie, never truer word said. You need not be ashamed of such love."

"We are parted for ever ; I am never to see him more if I marry Noel ; and you know what he says will be done."

"Not always, Nellie ; but he knows that is best. Glynne can do nothing by halves. He must do what is right according to his own fashion, or not at all."

"And I am to do no more for him ? Oh ! Selina, with God's help, I can make 'the Lady' think and do that which he loves and wishes."

"You have done your best there, Nellie. She is now removed from your sphere. May I speak to Richard ?"

"He will despise me evermore."

"And the Good God, who sees into all hearts—"

"Oh ! Selina, tell him all."

So three days passed ; and under their benign treatment I was enabled to separate the good from the bad in my heart. I thought to write to Noel, saying I would come home for ever, when the post arrived. It brought a letter from him. I called Selina, to read with me, this—what I would consider as my first love

letter ; trembling, perhaps blushing, at the idea.

Selina laughingly came. She knew all my thoughts almost as well as myself. She was so true a woman, none need fear her scrutiny. She laid rose-leaves cool, fragrant, and pure, on all she touched.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Heaven's gates are not so highly arched
As princes' palaces ; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees."—WEBSTER.

WE read the letter together.

"My Nellie, most precious and dear to me,
I have missed you sadly."

"I was thinking of going home to-morrow,
Selina," I interrupted, looking up at her from
the letter.

"Hush, child," she answered, reading on
still ; and as she read, her face paled, her eyes
grew larger.

"All the more, because, Nellie, I may never
see you again. For now, in the other room,
waiting but the completion of this last fond act,

are the surgeons ; you knew some time ago, dearest one, that it was the opinion of one of the most skilful of them, that an operation might restore to me the sight of one eye, (I miss the loss of neither with you by my side), and what is more to the purpose, free me from those intolerable paroxysms of pain, that not even your presence can soften. At the time the question was first mooted, no pains were taken to conceal from me, that death under the operation was more probable than sight or safety. So, for the sake of my mother, I gave up the idea. That is two years ago. My mother, alas, is now partially insensible to anything that might occur to her son ; my pain grows with time, more intolerable ; the surgeon is more convinced that some foreign substance lies between the sight and the brain, and that my agonies are caused by the endeavours of this substance to force its way out. Should it touch the brain, my Nellie, pray God for me then. It is to avoid such a fate that I have decided to submit to the operation. This was my secret, which has been such for some months. I was only waiting a favourable time. Your absence gives it me. If

God is gracious to one most erring, and I survive this operation, you will be my wife, I know, sweet Nell. This thought inspires me with a resolution and courage nothing else could bestow, but the touch of your soft fingers, that touch which has been as balm to me for so many times before. If I die, I do so, thanking God you were given me so long, as my child, nurse, companion—”

“I must go now, this instant,” I exclaimed, reading, seeing no more.

“We will go,” answered Selina, ringing the bell as she spoke.

No more words were spoken: in less than half an hour, Richard, Selina, and I were on our road back to Noel.

Then, and not until then, somewhat calmed, more by the conviction that no further exertion could be made to hurry our journey, than anything else, Selina asked for the letter, that we might finish reading it. But I could not put sense to the words. There were fond phrases, loving words, they did not seem addressed to me. Prayers for us both, (how I needed them!) thoughts holy and resigned. I was not resigned—

How good were Selina and Richard. As we drove up to the door, Selina drew back, that nothing might impede my view. The windows were all open. No, of course, I could not expect him to be in his usual place in the garden ; of course, after such an operation, he would be in bed. A face unknown looked out of his bed-room window, as the wheels of the carriage were heard. Probably it was a nurse, a new nurse, just for this time, while I was away. Now she would not be wanted ; I was come home.

I ran up stairs : no need for punctilio, no knocking at his door ; I was to be his wife very soon now. I did not care how soon.

He was lying on his bed. Almost could be traced his figure through the curtains. There were some people in the room, unheeding whom, I drew aside the curtain quickly. He lay there as if asleep, though deadly white, but that was to be expected.

"Noel," I said, "my Noel." No answer.

"Will his life be endangered if he is wakened?" I asked a gentleman, who recoiled at my entrance.

He gave me no answer, but gazed as in stupid fear upon me.

So I knelt down and kissed him, "My Noel," as I called him, and whispered all that was tender and most wife-like. Still no answer. I looked up for Selina and Richard; they were gazing at us both, they and the stranger-gentleman.

"He smiles," I said, "even in his sleep; he will never more endure such pain?"

"Never more," said the stranger; "take her away. That smile came to his lips as he heard the sound of wheels. We looked out at his eager request, and hearing that a lady was in the carriage, he pronounced the word 'Nellie,' and died—but this moment."

A sudden blow struck me. It was impossible to say whether it fell on my head or on my heart, but I was smitten to the ground,—nay, through it. I clutched hold of the bed-curtains; 'twas useless, they gave way in my grasp. I called to Selina, as I felt falling, falling. I saw her pale face stricken with a sudden horror, but lovely through all, in angel beauty looking down upon me; it receded from sight, growing smaller and more faint, full of the tenderest compassion. Falling, falling still!

I gazed up, with outstretched clinging arms: my home, the little cottage, the calm and quiet dead, calm and smiling still, spite of my cries, vanished by degrees. My breath failed me, from the velocity with which I was sinking. Wild waves of clouds rolled over me, blinding me with a painful darkness, and suffocating me with thick vapour. Then came the quick flashing thought, "I shall be dashed to pieces, am I fit to die?" I, who had so often prayed for death, who had longed for it, who would have kissed death as a brother, now cried in agony, "My God! spare me!" I was not fit to die, I had not kept my heart child-like and pure; it was not yet freed from a sudden taint of sin; the purging therefrom was only just begun. Still was the shock delayed; as if in answer to my cry, a soft air breathed on me, driving away the choking vapour. I was stationary, falling no longer; how softly had I been laid on earth—if it was earth—from which I now arose. Thick, impenetrable mist surrounded me; I felt my way out of it, with the hesitating footstep of fear, faint with a burning heat, that came upon me as the blast of a furnace.

It seemed to me, that I struggled for weary hours, and though constantly toiling up a steep ascent, no nearer was I to light and air. But, thank God, unhurt by my fall, neither maimed nor killed, I could yet live to repent. Every step, therefore, was the herald of a prayer. Surely now a soft and gracious rain fell on my head, cooling the wild brain and hot eyes, while from above came that oft-heard joyous thrill of song, that the blackbirds carol out after a heavy shower. Ought not I to sing too?—Was not my need greater than theirs? So methought I sat down and rested awhile, singing a low hymn of praise. Hoping I was the little child, whose simple words arose above the chorus of heaven—

“A little child,
A little meek-faced, quiet village child,
Sat singing by her cottage door at eve
A low, sweet Sabbath song. No human ear
Caught the faint melody. No human eye
Beheld the upturned aspect, or the smile
That wreathed her innocent lips, the while they breathed
The oft-repeated burden of the hymn,

‘Praise God! praise God!’

A seraph by the throne
In the full glory stood. With eager hand
He smote the golden harp-strings, till a flood
Of harmony on the celestial air

Welled forth unceasing. Then with a great voice
He sang, the 'Holy ! holy ! evermore,
Lord God Almighty.' And the Eternal Courts
Thrilled with the raptures ; and the hierarchies—
Angel and rapt arch-angel throbbed and burned
With exquisite adoration. Higher yet—
Higher with rich magnificence of sound
To its full strength ! And still the infinite Heavens
Peal'd with the 'Holy ! holy ! evermore ;'
Till, vibrating from excess of love and awe,
Each sceptred spirit sank before the Throne,
With a mute Hallelujah. But even then,
When the ecstatic song was at its height,
Stole in an alien voice—a voice that seemed
To float, float upward from some world afar ;
A meek and child-like voice, faint, but most sweet,
It blended with the seraph's rushing strain
Even as a fountain's music, with the roll
Of reverberate thunder. Loving smiles
Lit up the beauty of each angel's face
At that new utterance. Smiles of joy that grew
More joyous yet, as ever and anon
Was heard the simple burden of the hymn,
'Praise God ! praise God !' And when the seraph's song
Had reached its close, and o'er the golden lyre
Silence hung listening—When the Eternal Courts
Rung but with echoes of his chaunt sublime,
Still through the abyssmal space, that wandering voice
Came floating upward from its world afar,
Still murmur'd sweet through the celestial air,

'Praise God ! praise God !' "

ANON.

So, singing thus soft and low, knowing that the faintest whisper reaches heaven, the thick darkness began to roll in solemn folds away ; a golden cloud floated around. Warmth and hope stole to my shivering heart, as it divided and revealed a doorway. Some strong refulgence shone on the other side of it, for even though sparkling through the crevices, it pained me to blindness. Covering my dazzled eyes with trembling hands, voices broke on my ear, my name was said.

"I am here, here," I exclaimed, wildly flinging myself against the closed door. "Open and let me in."

"Ah, Roland!" said a voice well known, though years had elapsed since I had heard it; "it is our child, our Nellie! She has never been so near us before!"

"Mother! mother! take your little Nellie to your heart. I am lonely, sad—open—open to me."

There was no answer.

Calming the wild sobs bursting from my heart, I knelt by the door, bending my ear to the loophole, to catch the first words.

There was a whisper as of silvery murmurs,

and a rustling, as if the pearled feathers of ring-doves shook with sudden emotion.

“The child, for whom they have waited so long at the gate, is knocking. ‘Is it time?’”

This was repeated, as it seemed to me, from circle to circle, from cloud to cloud, from star to star, until, like a distant echo, I heard it up in the furthest, bluest Heaven. And a voice answered full, like a river of melody,—soft, yet filling the heavens, the earth, the caverns, the deep places of the sea with its sweet power—
“It is not time.”

And I sank, heart-stricken, to the foot of the door. Of a sudden it seemed transparent, and I saw through it my father and mother, Noel, my kind grandfather. They smiled on me, with peace and happiness on their faces. Noel’s was like the beautiful picture I had first seen, framed, in the window of the little hired carriage, no pain, no care, no furrows thereon. Dazzling were their garments, all hues, all changing, all burnished with silvered pearls, and gleaming with crimson and purple tints. Slowly they faded from sight, bidding me farewell, with gentle beckonings, and soft smiles of hope.

So I was left in the dark, weeping bitterly. And presently came to my heart, a feeling of peace and serenity. "I have work to do yet; it shall be done, as well as weak mortal can promise." So I wiped away the hot tears that blinded me, and looked up in trust and hope. The soft eyes of Selina met my gaze. I was at home, lying on my own bed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Thou who dost dwell alone—
Thou, who dost know thine own—
Thou, to whom all are known
From the cradle to the grave—
Save, oh ! save.

From the world's temptations,
From tribulations ;
From that fierce anguish
Wherein we languish ;
From that torpor deep
Wherein we lie and sleep—
Heavy as death, cold as the grave—
Save, oh ! save."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

"It was not yet time, Selina," I said.
Strange, methought, sounded my voice.
"No, love," she answered, stooping and
kissing me.

Her look was calm and composed, but the quick blood crimsoned her face, as if her heart had bounded, and a tear fell on my face.

I did not care to say more ; it was as if I could not. There was no need, Selina would watch, I knew. She would not let me fall again.

So I turned to sleep.

When I awoke, again Selina's face bent over me ; Richard was looking eagerly over her shoulder.

"It was a sad fall, but hurt me not, I think." I wished to assure them no harm was done.

Selina looked quickly at Richard.

He said, in his usual voice,

"That is well, Nellie, you will be up in a few days."

"Did you raise me up?" I asked Richard, after a little pause.

"No, the Lord did."

"The Lord be praised."

"Amen, Nellie."

That "Amen" reminded me.

"I saw my grandfather, Richard ; it was

hard to be so near, and yet not able to join them. It was not time."

"No, Nellie, you have got work to do."

"Yes, yes, I must rise, Noel—but Noel is dead, he requires no more work from me."

Selina bent over and kissed me again.

"Hush, darling, you must not talk."

"I saw him, Selina; he looked well and happy, as in those old early days. No more pain, or trouble. You have taken off your blue dress, and put on this black one, knowing he is happy."

"Yes, Nellie, because we are unhappy at losing him."

Her voice was calm and beautiful; so soothing; out of her eyes shone the same lustre I had seen in theirs.

"Do not you go, too, Selina?"

"No, love, it is not time."

Then Richard read awhile, holy, good words. They were familiar, yet fell freshly on the ear; they appeared to have a different sense attached to them; perhaps heard in childhood, they now spoke to a woman, experienced, sin-laden. The words fell like balm on my heart.

Shortly I said to Selina—

“I must have a black dress such as you have, to go to the funeral, for though I know he is happy, I would not have people think I did not mourn him.”

Then did she again give me one of her fond, lingering kisses; this was her mode of soothing, comforting, preparing — For what?

“I am well, Selina, sufficiently strong.”

“My darling, you have been ill; our poor Noel has been buried some weeks.”

The tears gushed forth like rain. There was no more to be done for him; and then crowding one over another, came a long train of regrets, opportunities lost, kindnesses neglected. But such thoughts are beneficial; humility leads to God.

Then I lay many weeks, a wearied, faltering, invalid life. Selina and Richard did all they could, but they had to return to their own duties. So aunt Scann nursed me.

If she wearied me at times, she never wearied herself of incessant care and cheerfulness; and as I lay, silent from very weakness, idle from

utter incapacity, she became, at last, a sort of amusement or study to my vacant mind.

She ruled herself, by a certain code, to which I was some time discovering the key. Once found, I could foretell even the unspoken sentence, prophesy the next act.

Murmuring, or impatient, aunt Scann became kinder, and more cheerful, poured forth more liberally an unexhaustible fund of good-humour, until the distempered waywardness of a sick heart was fairly shamed out of ought moody and impatient. If I was well, and cheerful, disposed to exertion, then did aunt Scann sit quiet, but watchful; take no cognizance, yet full notice; apparently unheeding, but heedful all the while. If visitors came, and were prosy, wearisome, in the happiest, most hilarious manner, aunt Scann would hand them off, to view a certain flower, that she seemed to have ordered to bloom on purpose. If the guests were good and pleasant, she would thank them for their opportune visit, and profess to have a business to do, that their temporary care of her charge would enable her to perform, leaving us together.

"Because, my dear," would she as surely say to me afterwards, "it is a pleasant change for you, to have fresh faces and thoughts about you, and in my situation I have a good deal of mending, and such like."

Dear aunt Scann! I knew quite as well as she did, her "mending and such like" was the last thing of which she really thought of.

If I said anything to please her, (which indeed must also have sole reference to myself) though she took but little outward notice, I could see her lips move. God was so centred in her heart, she was thanking Him all day.

Sometimes she rose, after one of these mental prayers, and then, with a little stir and rustle, I would hear a sound, to which I could give no name.

"Aunt Scann," I asked, "that is the third time, this week, you have gone to the closet, and made that gentle ringing sound."

Aunt Scann blushed, and looked guilty.

"Must you know, my dear?" she asked entreatingly.

If I had demanded something hurtful to myself, sternly as any heroine would aunt

Scann have looked, felt, and refused. But when it was some question regarding herself, she was as helpless to say no, as the babe of a day's growth.

"Yes, I must know," pettishly said the wilful, spoilt invalid.

"My dear, don't fret, you shall know all. See, it is only a little common sort of a missionary box."

"And you put money in."

"Oh! yes, my dear, sometimes, when I have it to spare."

"But you put it in, at certain times, aunt Scann."

"Well, my dear, and so I do."

"After you have thanked God for something."

Aunt Scann blushed deeply, fidgetted, and looked confounded.

"And would you have me ungrateful, child?"

"No, aunt; but it is not every one who thinks it necessary to prove their gratitude, by other than prayers."

"Then I should be a very bad, ungrateful woman. I am not a widow, my dear, I am not

in the situation ; but I remember the widow's mite. And not being capable of doing much, I always feel it a duty, or rather I may say, a pleasure, when my Gracious Lord and Master has given me a happy, peaceful day, just to mark my sense of it, my dear, that's all."

"But you did it twice in one day, aunt, just after Miss Seymour's letter."

"Ah! my dear, and good reason I had. Did she not tell us of the fond mother, giving up her precious little girl, so calmly to God? That child prayed for, as Hannah prayed for Samuel, that blossom described as so fair, so promising—

‘He who asked it of thee
Loveth a cheerful giver.’

I would like to have died, my child, in place of the babe, but that could not be. So I thanked God in my way, for giving me such a lesson of resignation."

Thus aunt Scann's missionary box never stood empty.

Our first change was to Selina's house. Little children are like flowers of spring, ever

unfolding new leaves and buds, until the wintry heart becomes filled with the fragrance of summer blossoms.

We talked of my guardian as one at rest.

"In looking over his papers, Nellie (he left you in charge of them), Richard found this packet. I know what I should like to do with it." And Selina gave a sigh, as she presented me with the parcel.

I read on the back of it: "The history of the years 18——."

On thinking over the date, it came quickly to my mind that this was that memorable time when his engagement to Selina, and his strange marriage with her mother, took place.

"You would wish it burnt unread," I said, in answer to her sigh.

"Oh! Nellie, yes!"

"We will do it now, on the instant," and I placed it on the fire.

"But, perhaps, Richard——" said I, pausing.

"Out on you, Nellie, thinking thus for a moment. Richard and I do not like to have to think ill of any one."

So the packet slowly consumed, and shortly

no record remained to tell how two people had sported with an innocent and tender heart.

"Have you heard lately from Glynne?" I asked.

"Nellie, not a line, not a trace, for seven months or more."

"Ah! nonsense, Selina; his agents know his people at Glynne and Neville Court."

"They don't, Nellie; Richard has written to them."

"I will write to 'the Lady.' I know her last direction."

"Nellie, Glynne Castle and Neville Court are shut up; Glynne arranged all his affairs, while in Ireland, for an absence indefinite. In fact, he did not scruple to say for—life."

CHAPTER XXIX.

“ Like a sailing eagle old,
Which with unwavering wings, outspread and wide,
Makes calm horizons in the slumberous air
Of cloudless noon, filling the silent heaven
With the slow circulation of a course
More placid than repose, this shining still
And universal day revolves serene
Around me ; hasting not, and uncompelled.”

BEDDOES.

SEVENTEEN years had gone since the time this story began, when, as a child, I had climbed up into the beech tree and willed to be a queen.

Once only, had a violent shock dismembered the ruler from her kingdom, and left it, for the time being, a wilderness unqueened. But the over-teeming soil rendered the process of lying fallow necessary for it. There must be nothing

left on which to feed the noisome, far-spreading weeds ; while the good seeds would show if they were sufficiently rooted to weather this time ; even to breaking forth, with fresh vigour, from the very discipline they underwent. To look back, the time was nothing ; though tragedy after tragedy had been enacted ; feelings excited that make havoc with a life-time ; scars and wounds left on the heart that mark momentous and never-to-be-forgotten periods.

Yet nothing availed of all that had occurred to sober or age me. As eagerly, may be, as nimbly, I ran up the beech tree on this twenty-seventh birth-day, as I had done on my tenth. On each anniversary, when at home, the same thing occurred ; and no staid or womanly feeling over-night resisted the uncontrollable inclination of the morning.

Up in my green throne I held communion with those " who were gone before."

It was just such a morning as on that tenth birth-day. In the same manner the sun rose ; in the same mood the angels seemed to sport as they ascended from their night-watch. The hares, the birds, the cattle all woke up, all per-

formed their duties, as seventeen years ago ; every thing was the same save one—myself. No grief stirred the leaves of the tree, no sobs were heard. The dread of parting was gone by ; I was filled with the hope of meeting. No vague and uncertain fate was mine. A place was marked for me in the world ; with its pleasing circle of duties. It was a happy one, brimming over with contentment and the blessings of life. The last four years had been, each in succession, crowned with additional mercies.

Yet in all that time had we never heard of Glynne, “ the Lady,” my boy.

Selina and I had ceased to mourn for their absence, knowing that as long as Glynne was with them they would do well. We only begrudged the mystery in which it was wrapped for our own sakes. Meantime but few other changes had taken place. Aunt Scann and I had buried Mrs. Forest, by the side of her son. We did not mourn for one whose spirit left before the body. We had endeavoured to make her happy, while with us. Many visits had passed between us and the Bernards. Once or twice I had stumbled across the Grants, and not

without collision : it appeared as if the older Mr. Grant became, the more necessary was it for him to be on vigilant guard against evils ; and while he trusted his own concerns, in a species of wild romancing, to Providence, no other being might claim the same privilege. On the contrary, they must be guided by Mr. Grant—with reason or without—foolishly or wisely—as it might happen.

A slight degree of common sense would not have been misplaced in his own family : they had a number of children, Providence must feed them, while Mr. Grant spent the sum necessary, in adorning his church or subscribing to religious societies. Thus worldly cares often oppressed the poor man ; yet nothing affronted him more than the offer of help, or the gift of money, even from Mrs. Grant's parents. He looked upon such acts as insults to the Almighty ; and when we, touched by their shivering looks, made and presented each of the little Grants with a warm winter-dress, he returned them all, with a note, whose very seal looked indignant.

Experience proves that a great show of wrath wastes itself on the onset ; and a breach in the

citadel of pride is soon made with a little determination or art. So we boldly returned the frocks, saying, that being made to fit the children, we should be obliged if he would allow them to wear them, as in their present form they were useless to either Aunt Scann or myself. Touched by this fact, he consented ; but, to compromise matters, brought us half-a-crown for each frock, as a sort of bargain with himself.

“ Why should Mr. Grant ignore his neighbours ?” I asked of his wife.

She was secretly glad of the frocks ; so I escaped a long lecture upon impugning his motives, and was told instead, if there was any of the stuff left she should like to buy it, for tippets to the frocks. So she had it, and moreover paid for it. Under cover of which act, I gave, in as strong language as I could, a lecture on what people deserved who were so independent of the command—“ Do unto your neighbour as you would do to yourself.” And all the half-crowns Aunt Scann put secretly into the pockets of the new frocks, from whence we saw them no more.

As for Selina and Richard, their course had

run like mine, smoothly. One little blooming bud, that particular bud, which imperceptibly, almost unknown to the parents' hearts, grows nearer to it than all the others, had been taken to be a choice flower in the garden of heaven. And as they mourned, so did I,—we felt this grief together.

But as I sat here, on my green throne, on this birth-day, the breath of the child-made-angel fanned my cheek, as if to give me the assurance, while thinking of her, I need mourn no more; the air of heaven she breathed on me was so soft and fragrant, exhilarating and unearthly.

The question was being asked in my kingdom, "Would I choose to be that child" (were the choice given me), "or live my life, even to go over it again?" when Aunt Scann was heard calling me to breakfast.

As my foot touched the ground, and my hands released the lowest bough of the beech, I found myself thanking God for my lot.

Aunt Scann read prayers—not well, 'tis true—somewhat after the fashion of a lesson. Besides, now and then, she lost her place, looking

over her spectacles to see if all our maidens were present.

Never had it been known that any were absent, but it was a way with Aunt Scann. During one of these pauses, the wheels of a carriage were heard ; and before we rose from our knees, the bell of the cottage door was pealing.

I made up my mind to a great surprise—a pleasurable one, fitted for a birth-day. I own to a disappointment on seeing Mr. and Mrs. Grant. Much time was taken up in assuring us that only urgent business would have brought them at so unseemly an hour. With great difficulty we got through breakfast, without the delay of a more formal explanation.

Mr. Grant was alternately apologetical, yet patronizing ; humble, yet important ; hungry, yet full of something of much more consequence ; while Mrs. Grant did not scruple to show, in the same way as any earthly mortal, that she was remarkably happy.

MR. GRANT (after breakfast, rising, with a certain swell of great import). Miss Offley, I have come to consult you upon a matter, extra-

ordinary, I must allow, though often such things are, in reality, tokens of answers to prayers—marks of that providence that rules and watches over us all. Yes, you, as well as myself——

It took me some time to realise the fact that Mr. Grant wished to consult any one, much less myself, so that I did not attend to his long opening exordium, until the words “Lady of Glynne” startled my ears.

“Where is she?” I exclaimed, hurriedly, laying my hand on Mr. Grant’s arm, and bringing him forcibly and abruptly to a sudden stop.

I had time to repeat my question more than once, ere he could recall his thoughts from the stream in which they had been running.

MR. GRANT. Miss Offley, what—how? I do not know. I am sorry to say I never asked my Lord; yet we ought to have done so, Louisa.

NELLIE. My Lord! Where did you see him? Have you heard of him? Oh, speak, Mr. Grant, tell me at once!

MR. GRANT. Upon my word, this is most inexplicable, Louisa. I am still more glad we came.

NELLIE. Is my Lord in England?

I said this in a slow, indifferent voice. Mr. Grant should not be delayed in answering by any vehemence on my part. But hope and happiness would speak out of my eyes, throb wildly in my heart; we should see them all again: blessed be the Grants!

MR. GRANT. No; I think not, Louisa. I think my Lord said he was about to leave.

NELLIE. But you have seen him?

MR. GRANT. I think he said he was going to Ireland.

NELLIE. Ireland? Oh, happiness!—they really have returned! And “the Lady”—the dear Lady!—she is at Harrington Court?—she sent you for me?

MR. GRANT. Upon my word, Miss Offley, I am quite at a loss to understand you. Can you, Louisa?

MRS. GRANT. No, by no means. It is entirely affectation on your part, I must think, Uriel.

NELLIE. Then, say what you have got to say. I wish to go and see my cousin.

MR. GRANT. We do not know—we ought to have asked—our own cousin. We do not know where she is laid. In foreign lands, of course, is her grave.

CHAPTER XXX.

“ Hold ! A stigma, though deserved,
When a child brands it, makes the hearer weigh
The censure with the sin ; but if unjust—
No, no, you could not mean it.

Anne. Say, I did—

What warrant cites me to your bar ?

Thorold. That instinct

Which makes the honour'd memory of the dead
A trust with all the living.”—MARSTON.

“ THE poor Lady” dead ! Of what ?—when ?
Did she die happily ? Was she fit ? Was it
painful ? The tears would gush forth, in quick
floods, while the Grants upbraided themselves
with having neglected to ask where she was
buried.

By degrees, they consoled each other with the
promise that their omission should be atoned for
by letter.

MR. GRANT. My Lord's direction is Glynne Castle, I believe. We will write immediately, Louisa—to-day.

NELLIE. Did you see my boy? Was Neville with his father?

MRS. GRANT. Of course, Master Glynne was with his papa.

Even in that moment of intense pain and pleasure combined, the incongruity of the word "Master," applied to the young Glynne, appeared to me ludicrous. At the most important times do people think the most trivial nonsense.

NELLIE. And on what did you wish to consult me, Mr. Grant?

I did my best to be calm.

MR. GRANT. Exactly; let us return to the important matter, for which I have taken this long journey. I might say something about the expense, but that is not so much an object to me now.

MRS. GRANT (joyfully). No, indeed.

MR. GRANT. And yet, Louisa, we must not be wasteful squanderers,—Miss Offley, "the Lady of Glynne," our cousin, has left us the Harrington Court estate.

NELLIE. Mr. Harrington, then, is dead ?

MR. GRANT (really a little out of temper). Be so kind as to allow me to proceed. An hour nearly gone, and not one word have I been able to say.—No, he is not dead. In fact, he is still alive.

Mr. Grant paused, as if to give me time to contradict that statement ; then finding nothing was said, he proceeded.

“ I think I ought to have said Harrington Court has become mine by a deed of gift, partly owing to ‘ the Lady of Glynne’s ’ spoken bequest, and partly owing to Mr. Harrington’s express desire. Finally, my Lord of Glynne seems to have been their principal adviser and controller in the matter.”

NELLIE (irresistibly). Of course.

MR. GRANT. I could find fault with your interruption, were it not that I came expressly to inquire of you if such was likely to be the case, because — (and here Mr. Grant’s usual monotonous and unpleasing voice, assumed a character of decision and manliness that spoke pleasingly on the ear)—because, in that case, I do not feel justified in accepting the estate. It

appears that old Mr. Harrington has a great love and affection for you, (I trust you have done your best to deserve it), and also that his daughter, in her last moments, spoke a great deal of you, calling on you, though I believe she was in some delirium. Her death appears to have been both sudden and shocking—pray do not weep;—such violent demonstration against the decrees of Providence, would be sinful even at the moment of separation. But when I understand it is between three and four years—am I not right, Louisa?

MRS. GRANT. Yes, she died of the cholera, that year it was so violent all over Europe, very nearly four years ago. My Lord thinks she wore herself out with the fear of it. She made him take her to some small island in the Mediterranean, and of course, Edward, she is buried there.

MR. GRANT. I know not, but still I think not. As I said before, I cannot take this estate from the Lord of Glynne, and young Master Glynne, though I need not say it would be highly beneficial to the religious and moral welfare of the people if I did, without being

perfectly certified that Mr. Harrington is competent to make such a gift. I mean, that he is thoroughly aware what he is doing.

NELLIE. Your scruples do you honour, Mr. Grant. I fancy the Lord of Glynne would counsel his father best. I have not seen Mr. Harrington for many years.

MR. GRANT. We are to meet him here to-day.

NELLIE. To-day!—now! — Glynne — Neville!—

MR. GRANT. I was about explaining everything to you, Miss Offley, only, as I said before, your impetuosity is so great, your interruptions so frequent, I really am utterly unable to cope with you. Mr. Harrington is to be here in the course of to-day, (if you will allow us to remain until that period), on purpose to see you. My Lord had business in Ireland, but Master Glynne accompanies his grandpapa——

Then, indeed, I heard no more. My boy—my darling!—to be here to-day, perhaps in an hour!—the Grants might think what they chose, I could hear no more, say no more. A request that they would stay as long as they liked, a few

incoherent orders of preparation, luckily caught up and modified by Aunt Scann, was all I could do. In the very face of the Grants I ran up the beech-tree, high, higher than my throne, high as I could go, and sat there, watching, with scarcely a thought of the poor Lady, with nothing in my heart but the joy of seeing my Neville. Heartless, cold, unfeeling I must have been to have borne his loss so calmly through all these years.

A cloud of dust. Oh, wind ! sweep it back with your potent power, and let me see if the envious veil conceals a carriage. Yet, again, I must wait ; but not for long. Four horses, smoking with speed, could not hide the boyish figure, leaning out of the carriage window, in impatience equalled only by my own.

Did ought on earth wear so beautiful an aspect as my boy ? Had I forgotten he was so handsome ? It must be so ; as instead of nothing but love filling my heart as I caught sight of him, an uncontrollable rush of admiration made me exclaim at his beauty, even as he sprang towards me, saying, " Nellie — boy's Nellie — mother — I have come home to you at last ! "

We forgot everybody but ourselves ; yet, in the very midst of my highest joy, did a sharp regret prick me, that I could ever have felt happy without him.

Mr. Grant's unfeigned astonishment at the outburst of affection so uncontrollable on my part, because the cause of it was so little expected, first recalled us to the fact of spectators. He would have interrupted us, I believe, had not old Mr. Harrington insisted upon no one spoiling a scene, that gave him such unfeigned delight to witness.

MR. GRANT. This is a weakness, surely, to suffer human affections to gain such a height !

MR. HARRINGTON. It is beautiful, it is divine to see ! A son restored to his mother !

MR. GRANT (amazed). Sir ! — Mr. Harrington—

AUNT SCANN. What a situation !—oh, what a delightful situation !

MRS. GRANT. Certainly, spontaneous affection is a pleasing sight.

All these remarks recalled Neville and me to our senses. We were abashed that we had ever deserved them, and exposed ourselves to such a variety of comments.

"Go, Neville, you must go, dear, somewhere out of my sight, until Mr. Grant's business is settled," I whispered to him.

"Let him do his business here; I will not interrupt him."

How beautiful was the boy! how like his father in his imperious, yet bewitching pride of look and action. Yet had he his mother's fair skin, and peach-like bloom.

MR. GRANT. I can allow no one to be present with Miss Offley during her interview with Mr. Harrington. She must not be biassed; her judgment must be left clear.

"Go and sit in the beech-tree until I call you?" I asked. He consented at last, looking at Mr. Grant, with his brows as ominously knit as ever his father's were in his darkest moods.

Poor Mrs. Grant regarded me with anxious looks as Mr. Harrington and I left the room. If we allow Nature a little law upon times, she does not revenge herself so signally at others.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

"The book is completed,
And closed, like the day ;
And the hand that has written it
Lays it away.

Dim grow its fancies,
Forgotten they lie ;
Like coals in the ashes,
They darken and die." —LONGFELLOW.

So far from being dead, or having any thoughts of it, old Mr. Harrington was much more alive than I ever remembered to have seen him.

It amounts at times to a feeling of pain, the absurd thoughts that will thrust themselves into notice, whether or no.—There came suddenly upon me, the remembrance of the poor dear

"Lady's" description of her father without his wig—why, I could not tell: for it only gave rise to the thought, how well he was looking, how appropriate to his fine (though heretofore inane) features, was the tonsure of silver curls that now encircled his head. He looked much younger, he bore himself much better. He never need fear now, that any sudden disarrangement would uncrown him. Moreover, he thought and felt. He was not now Mr. Harrington with a daughter, but Mr. Harrington, responsible and self-reliant. Meantime, as we passed into the other room, I prepared to think on the matter before us. I could comprehend why Glynne wished to give that which was of little value to him, into hands whose very faults might be corrected from the possession of wealth. I thought it would be curious, perhaps edifying, to see how worldly prosperity might gradually sweeten the asperities of a nature cold and stern of itself, without the acrid cares of poverty added.

If the thought crossed me for a moment, that the possession of so much wealth, might afford him greater scope for the furtherance of his peculiar views, still did I think, (as I was sure

Glynne felt) riches and their duties would be Mr. Grant's best safeguard. One cannot look sourly on the world, when its fairest flowers are proffered for one's use.

No sooner were we shut up for our conference ; than Mr. Harrington took hold of my hands, and kissed me on the cheek.

" My dear, you are my daughter now. My poor Eliza always said that you would be so to me."

" I shall like to be so very much," I answered, though a little confused.

" I have been wishing to greet you as such for a long time, ever since her death. I will tell you of it. When my son returned to us, after his last visit to England, I perceived that some event had occurred which led him to accede, willingly, to a request we had been urging upon him, hitherto without success. She wished to have a permanent home abroad, and return no more to England. My son had not thought this advisable, on account of his duties as a landed proprietor. No sooner had he, as I said before, consented, and she had bought a new home, than the cholera broke out. My Eliza was fear-

fully alarmed by it, and would have returned instantly to England, had we not heard it raged there as everywhere. Therefore, at her earnest request, we located ourselves on a small island in the Mediterranean Sea, that contained but three houses, all of which my son rented. Here he had to work for us, even to obtain food, for none of the English servants would accompany us. You know my son, do you not, my dear?"

"Sir, you did not miss your servants," I answered.

"Truly, it was just so; I need say no more. But for the fears of my Eliza I would say to you, my dear, that I never remember to have been so happy. I was of use to my fine grandson, remembering well all I had learnt at school and college. I think what one learns in early youth is seldom forgotten, or it makes an impression upon soil yet malleable. So I felt, perhaps for the first time, I was living for some purpose. My health improved with this idea. I was wanted. Yet did my poor child suffer a little for the need of some accustomed luxuries. Wine she required, and having, by the carelessness of one of the peasants, whom we had brought with us to till

the ground, lost one out of the two casks we had laid in as store, my son became anxious to supply the deficiency, more for hers and my sake than his own, for Neville and he lived on the simplest fare. Thus, on seeing a ship in the offing, with the characteristic marks about her of a Bourdeaux vessel, laden with wine, he besought Eliza to let him go and buy some, promising to perform quarantine for any length of time she chose, at the house situated furthest away from the one in which we lived. She would by no means consent, and he left her to go on with his farming. But ere long she sent to beg he would go. She had heard from one of the peasant women, that these vessels often contained silks as well as wine, and she required some of the former. In vain did we remonstrate, representing the contagion that would hang upon silks,—she would take no denial. My poor child was always somewhat self-willed ; her present life unnerved her ; she had but little to amuse or employ her ; her mind became set upon obtaining these silks. You know my son denied her nothing when his persuasions failed to turn her. He set out, with only one other in the boat, and boarded the

vessel, leaving directions with me to hold his boy in strict thrall; they were ever inseparable; Neville rarely lived an hour out of his father's sight. I bound his obedience to me by the tie of that father's wish: but for this love between them, nothing would have restrained his fearless, loving heart; danger with his father was to him as pleasure to another boy.

"He returned in safety. My poor child said he was not to come amongst us for a week, and, like the newly-caged lion, did Neville pace up and down, within sight of his father, but separated as by bars of iron. My dear, that evening, at an hour when my son was fishing, to obtain supper for himself and the man who was equally in quarantine; at the time that Neville was with me, doing some of the work that usually was performed by his father—unknown to us all, my poor Eliza went to the cottage where the bale of silks lay. She took with her one of the peasant women to carry back such silks as she liked. My son found her in the midst of the unpacked silks, selecting the ones she wished to have carried back. She cried out in fear, forbidding him to come near her, and departed in haste and

trepidation, lest even the sight of him should harm her.

“My dear, she was dead in twelve hours from that time. It may have been caused by fear, by her weakened state of health, by infection really among the silks, which, we know not, for none other on the island took the infection. I will not dwell on her last moments, for both our sakes, but that more than once she said,—

“ ‘ Had Uriel been there, she would have stayed me : I should not have gone for those silks ; she would have done so herself sooner than I should have been endangered.’ And she gave me to you, my love, as a father, and my grandson is to be your child—you will fulfil my Eliza’s last request, I know.”

I kissed his hand in token of assent, but I said,—“ May I go and tell the Grants they are to have Harrington Grange ?”

“ Truly, Nellie, you may : but first you must hear a little more. It was my son who proposed they should have it, when in her rare moments of ease, my Eliza talked somewhat wildly of all she was about to leave. Also she said something to him of you, my love, to which he then

assented. But when, some months after her death, I spoke to him of the matter, urging, that if the Grants were to have Harrington Grange, my presence was necessary in England—he, he, ah! my poor son. Well, I heard you were married, my child, but that he had not liked to say aught to disturb Eliza's last moments. So then we went away, and, under assumed names, we travelled in countries seldom seen or visited. Nevertheless, he soon reads hearts, and from having had very little thought of my duties and responsibilities hitherto, he perceived it was weighing heavily on my mind, that I could not adjust my affairs. I have a great deal of money and property, and much of it was useless to me. I would rather people had not to rejoice in my death. And as I am always to live with my son, I required but little of it, so that the wish to give it over at once was very strong in me. I could not, however, tease him, with his heart so over-burdened with a secret sorrow. But suddenly, as in one moment, his great heart conquered itself: he said, 'Let us go,' and we came at once, even without an hour's delay. When we reached your sister's house, my son

met with the due reward of the sacrifice he had made, and with light and happy hearts we went down to Harrington Grange. I would fain have written to you, my child, but that wild boy Neville was bent on surprising you, and my son would hear of nothing being done until my mind was at ease. He made very strict and particular enquiries about the Grants, and found, that though not much loved, they were duly respected, and likely to make a conscientious use of their riches. Nevertheless, I deemed it necessary to draw up a paper, reserving to him the right of reclaiming the estate at the end of ten years."

"Which paper he has destroyed," I interrupted, almost unconsciously thinking aloud.

Mr. Harrington smiled. Then he drew forth from his pocket, an envelope, containing the fragment of a torn paper, and looked intently at it.

"My dear, you may go to the Grants; I perceive I need tell you nothing further of my son."

Mr. Harrington was no longer in danger of living unloved, or dying unlamented. He was

taking possession of everybody's affections with whom he came in contact.

The Grants were most sincere in their thanks, without being the least servile, little as I had had in reality to do with their good fortune.

"Edward can now do all the good he has in his heart," whispered Mrs. Grant, her whole face in a flutter of tears and smiles—both caused by joy.

"Louisa can have a proper governess for her children," was his first remark.

Thus—spite of all rules, rubrics, and canons, their first thoughts were of each other, and this I thought augured well for the future. They would be pleased now to remember that they had neighbours, for they could do them good; and of all the things most unloveable in this world is a hard, cold heart, proud in its poverty, repellent in an undignified isolation.

A little later in the evening, as we sat in the bow window of the drawing-room, (for the Grants had consented to remain until the next morning) Mrs. Grant said to me,

"I think I have misjudged your character once or twice."

I laughed, and nodded an instant assent.

Mrs. Grant might be so happy, as to open her heart for all sorts of new emotions; but my happiness was in no manner of way capable of being expressed.

"Well! I should like—I wish—is there any way—could I say any thing, which would make you forget it."

Riches agreed with Mrs. Grant.

"Forget it! I am always forgetting it."

"Forgetting what, Miss Offley?" interposed Mr. Grant.

"That you and Mrs. Grant did not always think very highly of me."

Mr. Grant mused; Mrs. Grant looked anxiously at him, while aunt Scann said—

"I should be sorry, my dear, not to think the best I can of everybody; for my Heavenly Master, at the last day, might rightly say to me, 'Judge her, as she judges others,' and melancholy would be my situation I know."

Mr. Grant looked up, and caught Mrs. Grant's earnest gaze. He blushed, fidgetted, looked uneasy: finally he came up to me and said—

"Miss Offley, allow me to say, there are very few people I regard with such interest; that is, of whom I have a higher opinion; in fact, I mean, Miss Offley, if I had not been so great an admirer of your character, I should not have taken every opportunity of proving it, as I have done, and will do—"

"No, I thank you, Mr. Grant, I would rather, if you please, live without your interest."

"How—how—surely the trouble I take in your—"

"Trouble and my Nellie are not to be named together," interrupted aunt Scann; and an unusual gleam of anger flushed her round, simple face.

I think aunt Scann was a bit of a hypocrite; at all events, she saw at the bottom of a good many things, when it suited her, being profoundly innocent of them, when it did not.

However, not even the possession of Harrington Grange could so far open Mr. Grant's heart, as to make him allow, he might be sometimes in the wrong. Neither did any other thing that I could discover, for we met often in after-life.

Mrs. Grant imposed upon me the task of initiating her in the true and rightful ways of fashion and fine-ladyisms; to neither of which qualities had she the remotest tendency, though an extreme leaning to. That is, nature never meant her for a great or fine lady. Yet her inclination strongly prompted her to be both. She indulged in the notion she was a leading star. Mr. Harrington and Glynne never repented giving them up the estate. But I am obliged to confess young Edward Grant is a very fast young man. He hunts—it is whispered he keeps a race horse—he smokes.—I have seen him, if his parents have not; he drives a dog cart, soberly with one horse, from his father's door, who shakes his head dubiously as to whether that is quite correct: what would he say, in another ten minutes, when the meek-faced stable boy emerges out of a thicket, with a leader for young Mr. Grant, sent on, some short time before? And if not all harnessed in due order, and put together in just no time, what words come out of young Mr. Edward Grant's mouth,—but no, I think it is ill-natured to say more. Servants are very provok-

ing, and get so accustomed to some peculiar sort of language, they will not work without it. But I am going "a-head" very fast myself. We are all in my cottage; Neville is coaxing me with eyes and words to play to him the piano. Mr. Harrington has just said—

"Mr. Graham, Selina, perhaps Glynne might arrive that evening."

"You are mistaken," said Mr. Grant, "my Lord has gone to Ireland."

"I think not," said Mr. Harrington, quietly.

"I should rather think not," adds my Neville, shortly. "Come, mother, play."

I rose to do his bidding. The swift blood rushed to my face at that word, which twice he had called me.

"Nellie," whispered Mrs. Grant to me, "one word with you here, away from the others. I must put you on your guard, otherwise Mr. Harrington's affection for you, and the boy's too, (calling you 'mother,') may raise hopes, which, I fear, can never be realised. My Lord is exactly the same sort of person he was when he went abroad."

"I am glad to hear it."

"Nay, hear me still. I am actuated by motives of true kindness to you. Mr. Harrington as good as said, he wished my Lord to marry you; but he will not, I feel persuaded. He hates ladies, and ladies' society, as he always did."

"I think he liked their society, Mrs. Grant."

"Nellie, Nellie, be warned, I know him a great deal better than you do; and to prove my words—would you believe it?—he never spoke one single word to me, or bowed, or noticed that I was in the room."

"His mind might have been occupied; he had but just returned home after a long absence."

"Not at all; for Edward, shocked at his want of common civility, drew his attention to me, saying, 'Surely, my Lord, you do not see Mrs. Grant, my wife!' He turned, and looked me full in the face, and absolutely, without the slightest recognition, continued his business matters. Edward was inclined to be angry; but I thought it a pity to run the risk of losing the estate, merely because my Lord does not know how a gentleman should act towards a lady."

I put my hand on her lips—

"You offended my Lord, if you remember."

"Nonsense! I should be sorry to think my Lord was so little of a Christian as to remember that circumstance—so trivial, too."

I opened the piano. My nerves were in no state to endure Mrs. Grant's common-place views of her own conduct compared with Glynne's.

"I must have the grandest music," whispered my boy to me, looking most beautiful in his full flush of glee and happiness.

"It shall be a Pæan of Praise, Neville. We must thank God for a restoration to each other."

"You play well, I should say;" and Mr. Grant beat time all wrong, on the back of my chair. Which is the worst failing, never to accord genuine praise, or never to discover you may be tiresome? I could not then decide, for some feeling prompted me to wander into the playing of an air long forgotten, never heard, never remembered since that time when Glynne said—"Lady Maria, I think I shall marry Nellie."

Something stirred in the room—Mr. Grant removed from behind my chair. I could see his

shadow on the wall, bowing in token of salutation, and a hand raised as if to enforce silence.

So I played on, determined to finish out the air. Solemn and grand rolled the notes, as full and powerful as I could make them.

Then, as they reverberated like faint echoes, after I had ceased, I looked up. Before me he stood whom I had never forgotten, long absent as he had been. And as I was struck with Neville's beauty, so did I wonder that I had not remembered how bountifully nature had gifted his father. How magnificent his proportions, how faultless the noble head, the waving curls. The broad, massive forehead, with the dark brows, so straight, so well defined, suffering for this time, the full power of the eyes to gleam forth. They were bent upon me with an earnest, speaking expression. Selina and Richard I felt, rather than saw, were near him. I could not speak; I waited to hear some word, some voice, but a sudden pulse throbbing loudly in my heart, was the sole utterance in that moment.

"Father," at last said Neville, "she is not altered; she is the same as ever; you said she would be old."

I rose as Neville spoke, and looked for the answer to his words, but nothing spoken came.

Nevertheless, he never removed his gaze from my face. It seemed to me as if his eyes spoke as plain, nay, plainer than words, and this is what they said—

“Say, are you my Nellie or no? Prove to me at once, now, this moment, if I remain here, or go for ever.”

So for answer, I went up to him, unheeding my Selina’s entreating gesture, blushing, I know, unable to look up for happiness, and placed my hand in his.

THE END.

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